Museological Representations of African-American History, Cultures, and Experiences

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Laura Burnham (Ph.D. History) *Museological Representations of African American History, Cultures, and Experiences*

My thesis comparatively analyzes museological representations of African-American history, cultures, and experiences in four museums: the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute in Birmingham, Alabama; the DuSable Museum of African American History in Chicago, Illinois; the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.; and the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, England. In addition to examining these histories, this thesis also questions the roles of location and politics in the creation of these museums, as well as how these elements impact the narratives presented in each institution. Moreover, this thesis incorporates debates from museum studies and tourism studies, applying concepts like authenticity and the tensions between education and entertainment to black history museums. This research also questions how these museums approach historical narratives in our modern world. In a highly-politicized time in which truth and fiction have been falsely equated, this thesis considers how the purpose of black history museums has evolved to respond to modern societal tensions. The conclusions from this thesis will contribute a full-length study of museum analyses to the field of African-American museum studies. While extensive research has been conducted regarding the background of black historical preservation, the African-American museum movement, and the origins of individual institutions, there have been no major examinations of the ways that these museums represent history, how these representations compare to those in other museums, and how black history museum narratives are impacted by geographic, political, and cultural frameworks. Moreover, this thesis will serve as one of the first large-scale engagements with the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. Finally, this thesis demonstrates the importance of exploring the ways that African-American history is represented in a non-American museum. This transatlantic focus extends the American-based scope that currently dominates the field, and the original perspectives gained from this inclusion may encourage further international engagement in future literature.

Keywords: African-American museum studies; black history museums; museum narrative; museum methods

This thesis is dedicated to Anice Nixon, who gave me the opportunity to pursue my educational goals.

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Introduction

'Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.'—Carter G. Woodson

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

'With the story of their fathers and their fathers
Fathers. And I shall take them into a way back time
of Kings and Queens who ruled the Nile,
And measured the stars and discovered the
Laws of mathematics. Upon whose backs have been built
The wealth of continents. I will tell him
This and more. And his heritage shall be his weapon
And his armor; will make him strong enough to win
Any battle he may face. And since this story is
Often obscured, I must sacrifice to find it
For my children, even as I sacrificed to feed,
Clothe and shelter them. So this I will do for them
If I love them. None will do it for me.
I must find the truth of heritage for myself
And pass it on to them. In years to come I believe
Because I have armed them with the truth, my children
And my children's children will venerate me.
For it is the truth that will make us free!'

Excerpt from Dr. Margaret Burroughs, 'What Shall I Tell My Children Who Are Black'[1]

Over 50 years since the emergence of the African-American museum movement, black history museums still maintain a special place within communities across the nation. Their appeal, however, has since transcended these communities as they attract visitors from across the nation and around the world. They are institutions whose purpose evolves with time, continuously adapting to whatever visitors, communities, and national moods require at that particular moment. During the civil rights and black power eras of the 1960s and 1970s, black history museums complemented cultural messages of historical appreciation, pride, and community uplift. After President Barack Obama's 2008 election victory, they worked toward countering the myth of the 'post-racial' society propagated by those who argued that racism had become extinct when America's first black president was elected. Nearly a decade later, African-American history museums have settled into their most recent purpose: teaching Americans about the nation's turbulent racial history during a

[1] Margaret Burroughs, 'What Shall I Tell My Children Who Are Black (Reflections of an African-American Mother)' (1963). Available online at: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/146263/what-shall-i-tell-my-children-who-are-black-reflections-of-an-african-american-mother> [accessed on 22 November 2018].

time in which facts, truth, history, and experts are under siege from the highest levels of political power.[2]

This thesis examines black history museums in their modern state, exploring museological representations of African-American history, cultures, and experiences in four museums: the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (BCRI) in Birmingham, Alabama; the DuSable Museum of African American History (DuSable) in Chicago, Illinois; the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) in Washington, D.C.; and the International Slavery Museum (ISM) in Liverpool, England.[3] This research critically and comparatively analyzes how each institution represents slavery and the long civil rights era, as well as how these representations compare to those of other institutions in this study. In addition to analyzing how histories are represented in these museums, this thesis also considers what is left out of these displays and how omissions impact overall narratives. Moreover, this thesis questions how museums approach racial histories in our

[2] The current societal importance of these institutions has been emphasized in some of the feedback to the American museums in this study. For example, visitors write: 'With today's unrest across the country we need to find common ground to stop the violence—[the BCRI] should be a mandatory history stop for every American!!!'; 'To me, the careful, honest and cohesive way [the DuSable] has been curated added to [my] understanding of the journey which is ongoing to this day, especially in these times. Things [that] seemed like immutable truths have again been thrown under the spotlight, not by the museum but by current events, making a museum like this even more relevant.'; '[The BCRI displays] are grave because…the current conditions faced by black America continues to be filled with pain, recrimination, and loss.'; 'I hope that [the NMAAHC] can…open up dialogues that will help people in this country…begin to tear down the strongholds of racism and intolerance.' See: *TripAdvisor* (3 October 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r424704574-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 15 October 2018]; *TripAdvisor* (25 April 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g35805-d144244-r478968090-DuSable_Museum_of_African_American_History-Chicago_Illinois.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 3 July 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (3 July 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r498359616-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 4 August 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (2 October 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r529278424-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 12 October 2017].

[3] This thesis stems from a semi-structured project advertised by Edge Hill University in 2013/2014. The project has been conducted in a partnership with Liverpool's International Slavery Museum. The partnership required the inclusion of the ISM, as well as a few African-American history museums as selected by the candidate. Thus, my contribution to the scope of this project has been the inclusion of the DuSable Museum, BCRI, and NMAAHC, as well as the focus on the slavery and long civil rights eras. This Edge Hill-ISM partnership has been beneficial for the project, and its most useful contribution has been the insight of the museum's director, Dr. Richard Benjamin, who has served on my supervisory team.

modern world and how the complicated relationship between past and present manifests itself in each institution. Amid a contentious political climate in which truth and fiction have been falsely equated, this thesis explores how institutions of knowledge represent a history that people need to understand to continue working toward a more equal society.[4]

[4] This opinion has been shared by some journalists who argue that black history museums and their messages are particularly important amid the current political climate. See for example: Adrienne Green, 'The Museum Grappling With the Future of Black America', *The Atlantic* (30 September 2017) <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/09/smithsonian-nmaahc-anniversary-little-rock-nine/541473/> [accessed on 5 October 2018]; Adam Serwer, 'The Cruelty Is the Point', *The Atlantic* (3 October 2018) <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/10/the-cruelty-is-the-point/572104/?utm_medium=social&utm_term=2018-10-03T20%3A43%3A10&utm_content=edit-promo&utm_campaign=the-atlantic&utm_source=facebook> [accessed on 5 October 2018].

THEMES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions guiding this thesis are based on themes that are central to understanding black history museums. The examination of four thematic topics have produced these questions, and this thesis uniquely applies debates from various fields—such as museum studies, tourism studies, and historiography—to black history museums for new insight into these institutions. Before these themes and research questions are detailed textually, the following table clarifies the ways that four themes have produced a series of research questions and sub-questions:

Theme	Research Question(s)
Education and entertainment	1. How do black history museums (BHM) approach the tension that can arise between education and entertainment? a. In an effort to make narratives more entertaining, do BHM ever favor accuracy over authenticity?
History and memory	1. How do BHM navigate disparities between historical truths and collective memory?
Interconnected and isolated timelines	1. To what extent, if at all, do BHM highlight links, themes, and arcs throughout history? Moreover, do historical timelines take a linear view of progress? 2. What is the relationship between the past and present in BHM and, similarly, do current cultural-political attitudes appear to impact displays?
Black history museums and place	1. Do BHM craft localized, nationalized, or internationalized displays, and what impact does this process have on overall museum narratives, purposes, and impacts? 2. What is the relationship between BHM and surrounding commemorative landscapes?

Many of these themes are centered on relationships between elements that can be dichotomist: education and entertainment; history and memory; local and foreign; past and present. With a focus on these ever-changing relationships, this thesis critically and comparatively analyzes the ways that black history museums represent slavery and the long civil rights era.

EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

While museums are vehicles of knowledge, they must also compete within a tourist landscape, and this competitive reality can produce museological narratives designed to entertain rather than educate. Of course, education and entertainment are not inherently at odds; however, when entertainment is prioritized over education, museums become institutions that provide stimulating—rather than thought-provoking—experiences. This theme has been extensively debated in museum studies and tourism studies (as discussed in the literature review), but it has not often been applied specifically to black history museums. To address this gap and contribute to the understanding of the education/entertainment tension, this thesis will examine how the museums in this study navigate this issue.

The disparity between accuracy and authenticity, which can arise when museums tailor their messages to those seeking entertainment rather than education, will receive considerable attention in this thesis. The concept of 'authenticity' has been detailed extensively in research analyzing museums and heritage sites, and it is almost always used synonymously with 'accuracy' (which will be discussed further in the literature review); this thesis, however, differentiates between the two concepts, offering a new dynamic to these literary debates. When historical representations are accurate but not authentic, they present skewed narratives that—though not technically incorrect—do not reflect a comprehensive, proportionate account of that history. While there are general examples of this dynamic that will be examined in the core chapters of this thesis, the tension between accuracy and authenticity tends to manifest itself in two particular ways—in the favoring of the spectacular or shocking over the mundane, and of the famous over the ordinary.

Extraordinary moments from historical narratives can be tempting to those whose task it is to represent that history to general audiences. These moments are exciting, recognizable, and lend themselves well to public history and heritage tourism. Slavery and

the long civil rights era are two periods full of these spectacular moments—events that linger in the national memory, even if they have been mythologized, idealized, or otherwise distorted in the process of collective memory creation. Of course, neither modern life nor history is comprised solely of the spectacular; on the contrary, these timelines are largely dominated by ordinary moments, broken up intermittently by extraordinary events. This thesis examines how these dynamics play out in museum displays and whether museological narratives embrace the ordinary or rely only on the most spectacular moments of African-American history.

Similarly, the tension between accuracy and authenticity can be considered in relation to who is being represented in museum displays. The two eras analyzed in this thesis produced countless famous figures, many of whom continue to inspire new generations today. People like Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks are central to stories of slavery and civil rights. These names are widely recognized and contribute interesting stories to the broader historical narratives being represented in museums. As such, museum displays seeking to attract and entertain visitors may rely on famous figures rather than creating displays that acknowledge the experiences of ordinary people. The core chapters of this thesis examine how the institutions in this study approach both famous and ordinary experiences, highlighting the balance that is struck between these two groups in each museum's displays.

HISTORY AND MEMORY

There is often a disparity between historical truths and memory. When the faults of human memory, the tendency to subjectively project one's experiences and worldviews onto objective information, and the overpowering nature of emotions combine, emotionally-charged, ahistorical narratives can dominate the popular understanding of the past. This is particularly true in the collective memory of antebellum slavery (a topic that remains

contentious and relevant centuries later) and the civil rights movement (an era from which witnesses and participants, along with their own stories, experiences, and memories, still survive). In the representation of slavery and civil rights, museums are sometimes faced with the choice of either representing narratives that are historically truthful but unrecognizable, or representing narratives that are recognizable but not historically truthful.

When museums prioritize recognizable narratives, the process may involve homogenizing or over-simplifying narratives to align them more harmoniously with the (sometimes erroneous) ways that they appear in personal or collective memory. On the other hand, museums can choose to embrace diversity of thought, complexity, and nuance in order to represent historical narratives that—though they may conflict with personal or collective memory of visitors—can challenge audiences to engage with the complexities of the past. The core chapters of this thesis identify disparities between history and memory, analyzing how each institution addresses the relationship between these two elements.

ISOLATED AND INTERCONNECTED TIMELINES

Historians and curators are aware that history is a series of causes. No historical period existed in a vacuum, and each event had a cumulative impact on subsequent eras. As such, it is important to understand connections between historical events, figures, themes, and eras in order to comprehend broader trends of history. This thesis questions whether curators prevent a stagnant understanding of the past by actively educating visitors about the links between historical eras, as well as considering the impact this process has on the overall effectiveness of African-American museological representation. Moreover, just as historical events did not exist in a vacuum, neither does the present. Both slavery and civil rights are highly relevant topics in modern political, cultural, and historical debates; as

such, this thesis questions whether or not connections between the past and present are highlighted in black history museums.

This thesis also considers the role played by current cultural and political climates in the museological process; in other words, how does the fact that visitors are viewing these historical displays in in the late 2010s impact what is displayed and how that content is presented? There are two specific considerations examined within this framework. First, this research questions whether black history museums adopt inauthentically linear views of history that convey racism as solely a past evil. Creating this juxtaposition between past and present racial conditions can create a problematic portrayal of modern race relations in the United States and Great Britain, but it may benefit museums by avoiding contentious topics or spending resources on narratives that are still developing in real time. Examining this question will advance scholarly understanding of the relationship between the past and present in history museums, while also considering the role of modern politics in the creation of historical narratives.

Second, this thesis questions the ways that modern political climates, attitudes, and debates can impact displays produced in museums. In the midst of a racially-charged presidential administration—and following racially-motivated attacks on the United States' first African-American president—history has been particularly politicized and weaponized.[5] While it is important to present black historical narratives that counter misconceptions and myths about African-American contributions to society, curators can sometimes overcompensate by adopting binary narratives that rigidly associate good with black and bad with white. In tandem with a research question that focuses on the importance of prioritizing diversity of thought and complexity over homogeneity and

[5] This is not to suggest that the current politicization of history is an anomaly; on the contrary, history has always been a political and cultural tool in contemporary societies. Instead, this argument suggests that American history is currently being politicized to greater extents and at higher levels of power than in previous eras—a combination that has produced an Orwellian climate in which truth and fact become, for many, indistinguishable from one another.

oversimplification, this research question examines how museums can produce empowering narratives without over-idealizing African-American history.

BLACK HISTORY MUSEUMS AND PLACE

There is a strong relationship between history and place and, as such, the location of history museums plays a significant role in their founding, mission, and narrative. This dynamic is particularly strong in black history museums, which are often located in carefully-selected areas of cultural and historical significance. This thesis examines the dynamic between black history museums and place in two ways. First, it questions whether museum displays are localized, nationalized, or internationalized. The geographic scope of museum displays and narratives provides insight into what museums are trying to accomplish; for example, some museums may focus narrowly on local history, while others divert attention away from the local and toward events impacting another part of the world. These different museological methods have varying emotive impacts. Learning about history in the place that those events occurred makes the narrative feel more tangible and emotional, while learning about a history that occurred thousands of miles away can feel more distant or detached. This thesis considers these museological methods, as well as what impact they have on the four museums in this study.

This thesis also examines the relationship between black history museums and place through an assessment of museums' positioning within broader commemorative landscapes. In America, few historical periods dominate the commemorative landscape more than slavery and civil rights. As a result, Americans are often faced with traces of these periods' legacies through museums, memorials, monuments, and other forms of historical commemoration. In many cases, people are likely to visit black history museums in conjunction with other museums or historical sites in the area. In this way, the surrounding commemorative landscape impacts what is represented in black history

museums and how this information is processed by visitors. This theme is also interesting to consider because of the political nature of commemorative landscapes. The development of black history museums has always been a political process that interacts with several other elements, such as other museums, political climates, and cultural attitudes toward race. This thesis examines all of these manifestations of the dynamic between black history museums and place in Chicago, Birmingham, Washington, D.C., and Liverpool.[6]

[6] A different approach would have been using each city as an independent case study, examining the dynamic of racial representation within Birmingham, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Liverpool. While this thesis could not incorporate these analyses due to scope and space limitations, the field would benefit from these contributions in future studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This thesis is interdisciplinary and draws on literature from museum studies, tourism studies, memory studies, and historiography.[7] Due to space constraints, this section will not provide a comprehensive literature review of each field; rather, it will highlight broad developments within the literature, pointing readers to further reading when necessary, before outlining relevant trends and arguments. While this literature review is sectioned into fields for clarity, it is worth noting that several of the topics (for example, commemorative landscapes) transcend individual fields; in these cases, they have been categorized within the field that contributed the bulk of the research. Moreover, while this thesis is interdisciplinary in nature and draws on literature, arguments, and debates from several fields, information from these fields has been used cautiously to avoid de-contextualization. This section will conclude thematically with an overview of three specific debates—concerning history/heritage, education/entertainment, and authenticity—in order to contextualize my own engagements with these areas of study.

[7] Though the literature in this thesis can be divided into these categories, my research should be considered within a framework of African-American museum studies, which is situated at the intersecting point of the fields presented in this literature review. After the mid-century interest in general black history increased—particularly seen in the rise of slavery studies by academics like Kenneth Stampp, Stanley Elkins, John Blassingame, and Eugene Genovese—the 1980s brought a scholarly interest in the study of historical preservation of African Americans. During this decade, academics made important contributions to the understanding of black historical preservation and dissemination. This surge in interest in the early 1980s came just two decades after the earliest stage of the museum movement and only a few years after the formation of the Association of African American Museums in 1978. In the 1990s, new research on African-American museums brought a contemporary element to the field. At this point, literature developed more depth—with some academics providing histories of black museums and others exploring issues within modern black history museums. In addition to literature produced in the history and museum studies disciplines, scholars also began contributing influential research on black history museums in the fields of heritage tourism and dark tourism, and these new lenses provided unique insight into museums and their visitors. It was not until the turn of the century, however, that studies began to target black historical representations in museum studies. Eichstedt and Small's *Representations of Slavery* (2002) set the tone for black-focused museum studies early in the decade and was followed by further research expanding the young field. These studies began exploring the methods used to display black history, examining the effectiveness behind different approaches. The 21st century studies were underpinned by research addressing connections between black history and place, as well as studies examining the role of memory in commemorating black history. All of these elements have combined to create a multifaceted view of black museological representation, with several approaches and perspectives being explored. There are, however, many topics that are under-explored in this literature—some of which guide this thesis.

MUSEUM STUDIES

In 1989 Peter Vergo signaled the ushering in of a new body of museum studies literature, or what he terms the 'new museology'. He explains:

> *At the simplest level, I would define it as a state of widespread dissatisfaction with the 'old' museology, both within and outside the museum profession….[W]hat is wrong with the 'old' museology is that it is too much about museum methods, and too little about the purposes of museums; that museology has in the past only infrequently been seen…as a theoretical or humanistic discipline, and that the kinds of questions raised [in this collection] have been all too rarely articulated, let alone discussed.*[8]

Vergo then specifies that the continuation of museums requires 'a radical re-examination of the role of museums within society', also clarifying that their success should not be measured 'merely in terms of criteria such as more money and more visitors.'[9] Vergo's argument that museum studies literature should situate museums within societies and find measurements of success other than profits and visitor numbers set the tone in the field. Moreover, these principles have guided my own research, as this thesis strives to examine not only museological methods, but their implications for—and meanings within—broader society.

While there is not space here to provide a comprehensive literature review of the extensive field of museum studies, there are several key works that have shaped the field and have influenced my research.[10] From the late 1980s onward, scholars like Robert Lumley, Ivan Karp, Steven D. Levine, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, Gaynor Kavanagh, Sharon Macdonald, and Gordon Fyfe contributed to the creation of Vergo's 'new museology'.[11] Monographs and edited collections produced by these scholars, and many

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[8] Peter Vergo, 'Introduction'. In Peter Vergo (ed.), *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion, 1989), 1-5 (p. 3).
[9] Ibid.
[10] For more information about museum studies debates that are relevant to this thesis, see the final section of the literature review on pages 31-47.
[11] Robert Lumley (ed.), *The Museum Time Machine: Putting Cultures on Display* (London: Routledge/Comedia, 1988); Ivan Karp and Steven D. Levine (eds), *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and*

others, created a solid foundation for academic understanding of museological approaches, the connection between museums and political/societal forces, and the challenges faced by curators in the last decade of the 20th century.

African-American museums were incorporated into the field in the 2000s, creating the subfield of African-American museum studies, wherein this thesis is situated. Most of the literature that deals directly with African-American museum studies focuses on the representation of slavery. Jennifer Eichstedt and Stephen Small's ground-breaking 2002 study on representations of slavery in southern plantation museums sparked an interest in this field and contributed a significant amount of information about the ways that these museums addressed slavery.[12] This focus on plantation museums has been expanded in other studies, and, when considered in conjunction with heritage tourism studies on plantations, has produced an extensive understanding of the presence of black history in plantation museums since the turn of the century.[13]

Even more applicable to this thesis have been studies that examine black history museums. While the history of these institutions has been considered in various historiographical works (see the 'Historiography' section in this literature review), scholars that analyze these institutions through the lens of museum studies focus more on methods, interpretations, and how these museums are positioned in a broader societal framework. Some scholars have analyzed particular museum collections, considering a range of

Politics of Museum Display (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institutional Press, 1991); Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992); Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (ed.), *Museum, Media, Message* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Gaynor Kavanagh (ed.), *Making Histories in Museums* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1996); Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe, *Theorizing Museums* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996); Sharon Macdonald (ed.), *A Companion to Museum Studies* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

[12] Jennifer Eichstedt and Stephen Small, *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institutional Press, 2002).

[13] See for example: Fath Davis Ruffins, 'Revisiting the Old Plantation: Reparations, Reconciliation and Museumizing American Slavery'. In Ivan Karp, et al. (eds) *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 395-434; Perry L. Carter, David Butler, and Owen Dwyer, 'Defetishizing the Plantation: African Americans in the Memorialized South', *Historical Geography* 39 (2011), 128-146.

institutions including the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the National Civil Rights Museum.[14] In addition to more general analyses of museums, some studies have focused on a particular theme or concept related to black historical representations, while others incorporate geography to consider black history museums in specific regions.[15] Though literature on historical representation in black history museums is still relatively sparse, the research that has been conducted has complemented studies in fields such as heritage tourism, dark tourism, historiography, memory studies, and cultural geography to provide insight into these institutions.

TOURISM STUDIES

This thesis has utilized debates, arguments, and concepts raised in two areas of the broad field of tourism studies—heritage tourism (studies related to historically-based travel) and dark tourism (a narrower form of heritage tourism that focuses on sites relating to death, disaster, or suffering).[16] Ideas produced in these bodies of literature—such as the concept

[14] See for example: Michael Honey and Juanita Moore, 'Doing Public History at the National Civil Rights Museum: A Conversation with Juanita Moore', *The Public Historian* 17.1 (1995), 70-84; Bernard J. Armada, 'Memorial Agon: An Interpretive Tour of the National Civil Rights Museum', *Southern Communication Journal* 63 (1998), 235-243; Victoria Gallagher, 'Memory and Reconciliation in the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute', *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 2 (1999), 303-320; David A. Zonderman, 'Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site; Birmingham Civil Rights Institute; and National Civil Rights Museum', *Journal of American History* 91.1 (2004), 174-184; Glenn Eskew, 'Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the New Ideology of Tolerance'. In Leigh Raiford and Renee Christine Romano, *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 28-66; Tracy Lauritzen Wright, 'To Form a More Perfect Union: National Civil Rights Museum', *Museums & Social Issues* 7.2 (2012), 245-254.

[15] See for example: Stephen Small, 'Contextualising the Black Presence in British Museums: Representations, Resources and Response'. In Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (ed.), *Cultural Diversity: Developing Museum Audiences in Britain* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1997); Derek H. Alderman and Rachel M. Campbell, 'Symbolic Excavation and the Artifact Politics of Remembering Slavery in the American South: Observations from Walterboro, South Carolina', *Southeastern Geographer* 48.3 (2008), 338-355; Stephen P. Hanna, 'A Slavery Museum?: Race, Memory, and Landscape in Fredericksburg, Virginia', *Southeastern Geographer* 48.3 (2008), 316-337; Ary J. Lamme III, 'Commemorative Language in Abolitionist Landscape Texts: New York's "Burned-Over District"', *Southeastern Geographer* 48.3 (2008), 356-372; Derrick R. Brooms, 'Lest We Forget: Exhibiting (and Remembering) Slavery in African-American Museums', *Journal of African American Studies* 15.4 (2011), 508-523.

[16] While Lennon and Foley distinguished dark tourism from heritage tourism, Duncan Light has recently argued that two decades of research have not clearly established how dark tourism is differentiated from heritage tourism, suggesting instead that dark tourism is 'simply a form of heritage tourism'. For clarity purposes, however, I will briefly outline the developments of both sets of literature in order to highlight the different ways that these bodies of research have developed. See: Duncan Light, 'Progress in Dark Tourism

of 'authenticity' or the tension between education and entertainment—have been particularly useful when they have been applied to black history museums. While research conducted in explicit relation to dark tourism tends to focus on slavery (though, in theory, this research could relate to elements of Jim Crow or civil rights history), heritage tourism is a broader classification that applies to the entirety of African-American history.[17]

Before literary developments in these two areas are outlined, it is worth noting the limitations and benefits of my engagement with research from heritage tourism and dark tourism. While heritage tourist sites and museums share many characteristics, there are fundamental differences between the two. First, considering museums within the framework of tourism places an emphasis on the dynamic between tourists and museums, neglecting the inherently community-based nature of black history museums. As John G. Beech points out, '[museum] exhibitions are designed for both residents [non-tourists] and outsiders [tourists].'[18] Thus when considering museum displays, it is important to acknowledge that tourist visitors and residential visitors have different experiences that shape distinct expectations from these institutions. Understanding the residential—as well as the touristic—expectations of these museums is particularly important in studies dealing with black history museums due to historical connections to their surrounding communities. Therefore, considering these institutions only through the lens of tourism produces a limited understanding of this topic.

Moreover, heritage and dark tourism sites tend to be located at either the original or the reconstructed site of the event being represented. By contrast, all the museums in this study are situated in buildings that are independent from the sites of the history being

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and Thanatourism Research: An Uneasy Relationship with Heritage Tourism', *Tourism Management* 61 (2017), 275-301 (p. 294).

[17] I have only considered slavery-based studies to fall under the category of dark tourism if this connection is stated explicitly by the author. Otherwise, I have classified them as heritage tourism studies.

[18] John G. Beech, 'The Marketing of Slavery Heritage in the United Kingdom', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2.3-4 (2001), 85-106 (p. 94).

represented. These institutions are associated with—but not necessarily sites of—the history that they represent, or what this thesis refers to as 'primary' and 'secondary' sites of history.[19] This is what distinguishes a site like the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute from the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church across the street—one presents a historical narrative, the other lived that history. The distinction between primary and secondary sites of history is important to note, as it indicates differences between representations, marketing, managing, and visitor reaction at heritage sites and museums. As a result, this thesis only engages with tourism studies within a boundary that acknowledges these disparities.

Despite these distinctions, there are concepts, themes, and debates within tourism studies that can be applied to this thesis' examination of black history museums. Concepts produced in tourism studies—such as 'dissonant heritage' and 'maritimization', among many others—have guided and shaped this thesis, and many of them will be considered in relation to black history museums for the first time. Most notably, the field's contribution of information on struggles between education/entertainment and authenticity have been valuable in my own research. The manifestations of these debates will be outlined later in this literature review, but first it is useful to consider the ways that these two bodies of research have developed, as well as the trends in studies that deal specifically with black history.

[19] Alternatively, Ana Lucia Araujo refers to these sites as tangible heritage (historical sites that have been organically produced with time) and intangible heritage (monuments, memorials, or museums built later with the purpose of commemoration). See: Ana Lucia Araujo, 'Welcome the Diaspora: Slave Trade Heritage Tourism and the Public Memory of Slavery', *Ethnologies* 32.2 (2010), 145-178.

Heritage Tourism

Heritage tourism, as Dallen J. Timothy and Stephen W. Boyd define it, is the process of travelling to experience historic places of cultural value.[20] As a scholarly field, heritage tourism is often considered to be a subcategory of the broader tourism studies field as a subset of cultural tourism. Though important research had been conducted earlier in the 20th century, the field took shape from the 1980s onward, paralleling what Duncan Light calls a 'heritage boom' wherein '[p]opular interest in the past attained unprecedented levels'.[21] This rich field has extensively examined the heritage industry, with studies exploring both the 'supply' and 'demand' elements of these sites, as well as highlighting the challenges facing the industry.[22] In addition to insight on topics like heritage/history, education/entertainment, and authenticity, existing literature has offered several concepts that have helped frame this thesis. These concepts—such as 'dissonant heritage', 'historical reality', 'heritage interpretation', and the 'tourist gaze'—were not developed in direct relation to black history museums, but they have contributed to a better understanding of the ways that these institutions represent the past.[23]

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[20] 'Heritage' as used in this field is most commonly defined as 'the present day use of the past', but different definitions (as well as distinctions made between 'heritage' and 'history') are examined in greater depth on pages 32-35 of this literature review. See: Dallen J. Timothy and Stephen W. Boyd, 'Heritage Tourism in the 21st Century: Valued Traditions and New Perspectives', *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 1 (2006), 1-16.

[21] Duncan Light, 'Heritage as Informal Education'. In David T. Herbert, *Heritage, Tourism and Society* (London and New York: Mansell, 1995), 117-145 (pp. 117, 123-124).

[22] For an overview of the heritage tourism field, see for example: Timothy and Boyd, 'Heritage Tourism in the 21st Century'; Dallen J. Timothy, *Cultural Heritage and Tourism: An Introduction* (Bristol: Channel View, 2011); Rudi Hartmann, 'Dark Tourism, Thanatourism, and Dissonance in Heritage Tourism Management: New Directions in Contemporary Tourism Research', *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 9.2 (2014), 166-182.

[23] 'Dissonant heritage' was conceptualized by J. E. Tunbridge and G. J. Ashworth and refers to the various—sometimes conflicting—ways that people think about history and heritage. 'Historical reality' is used by Frans F. J. Schouten to describe the impossibility of true historical objectivity, as Schouten argues that each visitor to a museum/heritage site has his or her own 'historical reality', in which historical facts have been mixed with his or her experiences, memories, worldviews, and expectations. 'Heritage interpretation' is not a concept that was new when Freeman Tilden wrote about it in 1957; however, his book *Interpreting Our Heritage* provided a systematic and philosophical outline of the practice of interpreting history in heritage sites. The 'tourist gaze' is a phrase used by John Urry to explore the lenses through which tourists view the social and cultural aspects of the world around them. See: J. E. Tunbridge and G. J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (Chichester: Wiley, 1996); Frans F. J. Schouten, 'Heritage as Historical Reality'. In David T. Herbert, *Heritage, Tourism and Society* (London and New York: Mansell, 1995), 21-31; Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage: Principles and Practices for Visitor Services in Parks, Museums, and Historic Places* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 1957);

Within heritage tourism literature, many studies have explored slavery heritage sites in West Africa.[24] From the mid-1990s onward research focused increasingly on visitors—particularly diasporic visitors who consider their visit a 'pilgrimage'—as well as on elements like stakeholders, site management, and the role of memory in West African slavery heritage sites.[25] This literature reflects the contemporaneous rise of slavery-based heritage tourism in West Africa. As historian Ana Lucia Araujo points out, the 1990s produced factors like public access to the internet and growing access to transatlantic travel. In response to this growing tourist base and increased demands for slavery commemoration, UNESCO launched the Slave Route Project in 1994 and joined with local governments in West Africa to preserve and promote African slave trade heritage, while many other organizations and independent operators opened their own heritage tourism sites.[26] Overall, then, the West African commemorative landscape changed drastically in the mid-1990s, which resulted in a wave of academic studies examining this memorialization.

In American slavery heritage studies—along with contributions and influences from other fields—much of the literature from the early 2000s considered the ways that

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John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990); John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (London: Sage, 2011).

[24] This topic has also been heavily explored in dark tourism studies, which will be discussed shortly.

[25] See for example: Edward M. Bruner, 'Tourism in Ghana: The Representation of Slavery and the Return of the Black Diaspora', *American Anthropologist* 98.2 (1996), 290-304; Patience Essah, 'Slavery, Heritage and Tourism in Ghana', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2.3-4 (2001), 31-49; Sandra L. Richards, 'Cultural Travel to Ghana's Slave Castles: A Commentary', *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education* 11.4 (2002), 372-375; Sandra L. Richards, 'What Is to Be Remembered? Tourism to Ghana's Slave Castle-Dungeons', *Theatre Journal* 57.4 (2005), 617-637; Elizabeth Macgonagle, 'From Dungeons to Dance Parties: Contested Histories of Ghana's Slave Forts', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 24.2 (2006), 249-260; Araujo, 'Welcome the Diaspora'; Aaron Yankholmes and Bob McKercher, 'Understanding Visitors to Slavery Heritage Sites in Ghana', *Tourism Management* 51 (2015), 22-32; Aaron Yankholmes and Dallen J. Timothy, 'Social Distance Between Local Residents and African-American Expatriates in the Context of Ghana's Slavery-Based Heritage Tourism', *International Journal of Tourism Research* 19.5 (2017), 486-495.

[26] Attempts to preserve West African slavery heritage can be traced to the 1940s; however, Araujo credits the rise of the internet, increased access to transatlantic travel, and other nation-specific factors—like Benin requesting financial aid from the World Bank and the IMF for 'memorial reparations'—for the tourist boosts from the 1990s onward. See: Araujo, 'Welcome the Diaspora', p. 146. For more on UNESCO's Slave Route Project see: 'The Slave Route', *UNESCO* < http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/slave-route/> [accessed on 10 September 2018].

African-American history was depicted in (or omitted entirely from) plantation tourism.[27] In 2002 Jennifer Eichstedt and Stephen Small's seminal research in *Representations of Slavery* provided methodical and extensive research that exposed the state of black historical representations in plantation museums.[28] The conclusions of Eichstedt and Small—that at most plantation sites 'slavery and people of African descent either literally were not present or were not important enough to be acknowledged'—set the stage for further examinations into this topic.[29]

Subsequent research has focused on the tendency of plantation museums to prioritize the planter (white elite) history over that of the enslaved, continuing to test Eichstedt and Small's concept of 'symbolic annihilation'.[30] These studies can largely be divided into two groups. The first consists of literature examining this topic through the lens of brochures, websites, or other forms of marketing, and questioning the ways that plantations balance the romanticized image of antebellum life with the realities of enslavement in their advertisements.[31] The second group focuses specifically on slave cabins and their role in plantation tours, considering a spectrum ranging from sites that use their cabins to educate about enslavement, to sites that have refurbished these cabins into

[27] Contributions to literature examining the role of slavery in plantation museums have largely come from heritage tourism (or, more broadly, cultural tourism or tourism studies), but have also come from areas like geography (including tourist geography and social geography) and memory studies. 'Plantation tourism' has been defined by Christine N. Buzinde and Carla Almeida Santos as 'the phenomenon wherein plantations are commemorated and toured'. See: Christine N. Buzinde and Carla Almeida Santos, 'Representations of Slavery', *Annals of Tourism Research* 35.2 (2008), 469-488 (p. 469).

[28] Eichstedt and Small point to three categories of slavery representation in plantation museums/tours: (1) The relative incorporation of slavery, in which 'the topics of enslavement and those who were enslaved are discussed throughout the tour'; (2) Marginalized slavery, in which 'slavery and African Americans are mentioned, but primarily through mechanisms, phrasing and images that minimize and distort them'; (3) Symbolic annihilation, in which sites 'ignore the institution and experience of slavery altogether or treat them in a perfunctory way'. See: Eichstedt and Small, *Representations of Slavery*, p. 10.

[29] Eichstedt and Small, *Representations of Slavery*, p. 105.

[30] Ibid.

[31] See for example: David L. Butler, 'Whitewashing Plantations: The Commodification of a Slave-Free Antebellum South', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2.3-4 (2001), 163-175; Derek H. Alderman and E. Arnold Modlin Jr., '(In)Visibility of the Enslaved Within Online Plantation Tourism Marketing: A Textual Analysis of North Carolina Websites', *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 25.3-4 (2008), 265-281; Buzinde and Santos, 'Representations of Slavery'; Meredith Stone, et al., 'Searching for the Enslaved in the "Cradle of Democracy": Virginia's James River Plantation Websites and the Reproduction of Local Histories', *Southeastern Geographer* 56.2 (2016), 203-222.

chic bed and breakfast rooms.[32] There have also been other lenses used to consider slavery in plantation museums, including the role of tour guides and emotional connections in shaping visitor experience, plantation tourist motivations, and racist memorabilia in heritage tourism, all of which have continued to develop scholarly understanding of slavery within the frameworks of tourism, place, politics, and memory.[33] Through these various lenses, this body of research has tracked the evolution (or lack thereof) of plantation museums in their journey from 'symbolic annihilation', to factual references, to an incorporation of slavery narratives that creates empathy or cultivates identity with the enslaved.[34]

Studies from heritage tourism have also contributed to the multidisciplinary body of literature examining commemorative landscapes.[35] Commemorative landscapes are created when place, culture, memory, politics, heritage, history, and commemoration

[32] See for example: Barbara Burlison Mooney, 'Looking for History's Huts', *Winterthur Portfolio* 39.1 (2004), 43-70; Stephen Small, 'Multiple Methods in Research on Twenty-First-Century Plantation Museums and Slave Cabins in the U.S. South'. In John H. Stanfield, II (ed.), *Rethinking Race and Ethnicity and Research Methods* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, Inc., 2011), 169-190; Stephen Small, 'Still Back of the Big House: Slave Cabins and Slavery in Southern Heritage Tourism', *Tourism Geographies* 15.3 (2013), 405-423; Ashely A. Dumas, 'Cabins as Far as the Eyes Can See: An Introduction to the Black Belt Slave Housing Survey', *The Alabama Review* 70.1 (2017), 22-49.

[33] See for example: Kenneth Goings, 'Aunt Jemima and Uncle Mose Travel the USA', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2.3-4 (2001), 131-161; E. Arnold Modlin Jr., 'Tales Told on the Tour: Mythic Representation of Slavery on Docent-Led Tours at North Carolina Plantation Museums', *Southeastern Geographer* 48.3 (2008), 265-287; Buzinde and Santos, 'Representations of Slavery'; David L. Butler, Perry L. Carter, Owen J. Dwyer, 'Imagining Plantations: Slavery, Dominant Narratives, and the Foreign Born', *Southeastern Geographer* 48.3 (2008), 288-302; E. Arnold Modlin Jr., Derek H. Alderman, and Glenn W. Gentry, 'Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy: The Role of Affective Inequality in Marginalizing the Enslaved at Plantation House Museums', *Tourist Studies* 11.1 (2011), 3-19.

[34] As E. Arnold Modlin, Derek H. Alderman, and Glenn W. Gentry point out, the latter two points should be considered as distinct characteristics of slave representation in plantation museums. As they argue: 'These factual mentions of slavery certainly represent an improvement over traditional representations of plantation life, but do not necessarily help tourists empathize or identify with the enslaved community.' See: Modlin Jr., Alderman, and Gentry, 'Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy', p. 5.

[35] As noted, commemorative landscapes have not been explored exclusively within the field of heritage tourism. Academics from many disciplines—including, but not limited to, tourist studies, memory studies, and geography—have worked toward furthering scholarly understanding of this topic. These multidisciplinary contributions have resulted in a rich body of literature addressing commemorative landscapes and the spatial element of collective memory. This literature development is placed within this category, then, not because it belongs solely to the field, but rather because it is the most sensible categorization within this literature review. For complementary work on the relationship between history and memory, see the section on memory studies literature on pages 27-29.

intersect.[36] While studies focusing on African-American commemorative landscapes have been utilized the most in this research, conceptual frameworks—such as '*lieux de memoire*', 'surrogation', 'symbolic accretion', and 'sites of counter-memory'— detailed in more general commemorative landscape studies have helped to further shape the ideas in subsequent chapters.[37] Grounded in these types of concepts, scholars began examining the relationship between black history and commemorative landscapes from 2000 onward. Works by scholars like Alan Rice and Charles Forsdick have focused on the African Atlantic and France (respectively), providing comparative analyses of the ways that black histories are commemorated in different Atlantic landscapes.[38] Most relevant to this thesis, however, is the work of scholars like Derek H. Alderman, Owen J. Dwyer, Perry Carter, and Patricia Davis, whose research on African-American commemorative landscapes have

[36] This study will use the term 'commemorative landscapes', though scholars have also used terms such as 'cultural landscapes', 'memorial landscapes', 'memoryscapes', 'monumental landscapes', and '*lieux de memoire*' ['sites of memory'].

[37] Pierre Nora's concept of '*lieux de memoire*' translates to 'sites of memory' and refers to the 'moments of history, torn away from the movement of history'. The concept of 'surrogation'—first used by Joseph Roach and later developed further by David Lambert—refers to the process in which societies fill voids in memory and identity through 'commemorative surrogates'. Within the process of surrogation there are sub-categories, like 'deficient surrogate' (when the commemorative surrogate fails to satisfy marginalized groups because it only partially addresses their history) or 'excessive surrogate' (when the commemorative surrogate is considered to be responsible for 'opening new ruptures…by expanding existing cavities'). Conceptualized by Ken Foote and Owen Dwyer, 'symbolic accretion' refers to ways that memorials/monuments are provided with multiple meanings and narratives. Stephen Legg's 'sites of counter-memory' refers to the use of spaces and practices by marginalized groups seeking public recognition of their historical accomplishments, contributions, and experiences. See: Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); David Lambert, '"Part of the Blood and Dream": Surrogation, Memory, and the National Hero in the Postcolonial Caribbean', *Patterns of Prejudice* 41.3-4 (2007), pp. 345-371; Ken Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscape of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003); Owen Dwyer, 'Symbolic Accretion and Commemoration', *Social & Cultural Geography* 5 (2004), 419-435; Stephen Legg, 'Reviewing Geographies of Memory/Forgetting', *Environment and Planning A* 39 (2007), 456-466.

[38] See for example: Alan Rice, *Creating Memorials, Building Identities: The Politics of Memory in the Black Atlantic* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010); Alan Rice, 'Tracing Slavery and Abolition's Routes and Viewing Inside the Invisible: The Monumental Landscape of the African Atlantic', *Atlantic Studies* 8.2 (2011), 253-274; Alan Rice, 'Confronting the Ghostly Legacies of Slavery: The Politics of Black Bodies, Embodied Memories, and Memorial Landscapes', *Atlantic Studies* 9.3 (2012), 245-272; Charles Forsdick, 'The Pantheon's Empty Plinth: Commemorating Slavery in Contemporary France', *Atlantic Studies* 9.3 (2012), 279-298; Charles Forsdick, 'Travel, Slavery, Memory: Thanatourism in the French Atlantic', *Postcolonial Studies* 17.3 (2014), 251-265; Charles Forsdick, 'Monuments, Memorials, Museums: Slavery Commemoration and the Search for Alternative Archival Spaces', *Francosphères* 3.1 (2014), 81-98.

considerably advanced the understanding of the ways that Americans remember—and forget—black history.[39]

Dark Tourism

In the 1990s researchers developed several forms of heritage tourism, which allowed them to apply theoretical and thematic frameworks to more specific areas of the field. At roughly the same time as the development of thanatourism research by Tony Seaton in the mid-1990s, dark tourism arose as a slightly broader framework through which scholars could consider tourists' fascination with places associated with death and disaster.[40] The term 'dark tourism' was originally used by John Lennon and Malcolm Foley in a 1996 paper published in the *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, and was further detailed in their 2000 book *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster*.[41] Lennon and Foley's introduction of dark tourism studies focused on the ways that sites associated with death, disaster, or suffering were presented to visitors (known as the 'supply' side of the tourism process). Moreover, they grounded this research within a postmodernist

[39] See for example: Derek H. Alderman, 'A Street Fit for a King: Naming Places and Commemoration in the American South', *Professional Geographer* 52 (2000), 672-684; Owen J. Dwyer, 'Location, Politics, and the Production of Civil Rights Memorial Landscapes', *Urban Geography* 23.1 (2002), 31-56; Owen J. Dwyer and Derek H. Alderman, *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008); Derek H. Alderman, 'Surrogation and the Politics of Remembering Slavery in Savannah, Georgia', *Journal of Historical Geography* 36 (2010), 90-101; Owen J. Dwyer, David Butler, and Perry Carter, 'Commemorative Surrogation and the American South's Changing Heritage Landscape', *Tourism Geographies* 15.3 (2013), 424-443; Patricia Davis, 'Memoryscapes in Transition: Black History Museums, New South Narratives, and Urban Regeneration', *Southern Communication Journal* 78.2 (2013), 107-127.

[40] Thanatourism and dark tourism are similar but distinct forms of heritage tourism studies. Whereas dark tourism focuses more broadly on tourism sites that explore death, suffering, disaster, or crimes, thanatourism examines the narrower relationship between tourism and sites of death. When this thesis overlaps with these themes, it tends to fit in more comfortably with dark tourism (particularly for an understanding of slavery representations); however, this thesis also incorporates studies that consider slavery within a thanatourism framework. For further reading on thanatourism see: A. V. Seaton, 'Guided by the Dark: From Thanatopsis to Thanatourism', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2.4 (1996), 234-244.

[41] John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, 'JFK and Dark Tourism: A Fascination with Assassination', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2.4 (1996), 198-211; John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster* (London: Continuum, 2000).

framework and, as such, argued that dark tourism was applicable only to atrocities that have occurred within living memory.[42]

The lens of dark tourism has been extensively applied to various heritage sites.[43] Most commonly, scholars consider dark tourism at sites relating to war, the Holocaust, prisons, and—most relevant to this thesis—slavery.[44] While slavery is frequently examined broadly in heritage tourism literature, whether dark tourism is applied to these studies depends on each scholar's opinion about dark tourism as a legitimate, independent, or useful field. Though several academics have conducted slavery-based dark tourism

[42] Lennon and Foley argue that dark tourism is a postmodern phenomenon, writing: 'The simulation of experiences, the critical importance of reproduction and duplication and the centrality of media and technology are characteristically present in any examination of these locations. Thus the contemporary context for dark tourism is that of post-modernism.' See: Lennon and Foley, 'JFK and Dark Tourism', p. 199. Lennon and Foley's use of postmodernism in dark tourism research has been a particular point of contention within debates concerning the field's scope. In fact, Rebecca Casbeard and Charles Booth have pointed out that this postmodernist framework excludes sites associated with slavery, even though this topic has been incorporated into the field quite extensively. For dissent from Foley and Lennon's use of postmodernism as a framework for dark tourism, see for example: Ria Ann Dunkley, Nigel Morgan, and Sheena Westwood, 'A Shot in the Dark? Developing a New Conceptual Framework for Thanatourism', *Asian Journal of Tourism and Hospitality* 1.1 (2007), 54-63; Michael S. Bowman and Phaedra C. Pezzullo, 'What's so "Dark" about "Dark Tourism"?: Death, Tours, and Performance', *Tourist Studies* 9.3 (2010), 187-202; Rebecca Casbeard and Charles Booth, 'Post-Modernity and the Exceptionalism of the Present in Dark Tourism', *Journal of Unconventional Parks, Tourism and Recreation Research* 4.1 (2012), 2-8.

[42] See for example: A. V. Seaton, 'Thanatourism and its Discontents: An Appraisal of a Decade's Work with Some Future Issues and Directions'. In Tazim Jamal and Mike Robinson (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Tourism Studies* (London: Sage, 2009), 521-542 (p. 525); Bowman and Pezzullo, 'What's so "Dark" about "Dark Tourism"?', p. 191; Tazim Jamal and Linda Lelo, 'Exploring the Conceptual and Analytical Framing of Dark Tourism: From Darkness to Intentionality'. In Richard Sharpley and Philip R. Stone (eds), *Tourist Experience: Contemporary Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2011), 29-42.

[43] In fact, the focus on themes and sites has resulted in criticism by some scholars who feel that there is an imbalance within the field favoring case studies. Philip Stone and Richard Sharpley, for example, call dark tourism literature 'eclectic and theoretically fragile', while Aaron Yankholmes and Bob McKercher note that the literature 'has largely failed to address epistemological issues.' See: Philip Stone and Richard Sharpley, 'Consuming Dark Tourism: A Thanatological Perspective', *Annals of Tourism Research* 35.2 (2008), 574-595 (p. 575); Aaron Yankholmes and Bob McKercher, 'Rethinking Slavery Heritage Tourism', *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 10.3 (2015), 233-247 (p. 235).

[44] For examinations of slavery sites in dark tourism literature, see the following paragraph. For examinations of war, the Holocaust, or prisons in dark tourism/thanatourism studies, see for example: A. V. Seaton, 'War and Thanatourism: Waterloo 1815-1914', *Annals of Tourism Research* 26.1 (1999), 130-159; Joan C. Henderson, 'War as a Tourist Attraction: The Case of Vietnam', *International Journal of Tourism Research* 2 (2000), 269-280; Stephen Miles, 'Battlefield Sites as Dark Tourism Attractions: An Analysis of Experience', *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 9.2 (2014), 134-149; John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, 'Interpretation of the Unimaginable: The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., and "Dark Tourism"', *Journal of Travel Research* 38.1 (1999), 46-50; John G. Beech, 'The Enigma of Holocaust Sites as Tourist Attractions—The Case of Buchenwald', *Managing Leisure* 5.1 (2000), 29-41; William Miles, 'Auschwitz: Museum Interpretation and Darker Tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research* 29.4 (2002), 1175-1178; Carolyn Strange and Michael Kempa, 'Shades of Dark Tourism: Alcatraz and Robben Island', *Annals of Tourism Research* 30 (2003), 386-403; Alana Barton and Alyson Brown, 'Dark Tourism and the Modern Prison', *Prison Service Journal* 199 (2012), 44-49.

research, others have questioned its application to slavery literature. G. J. Ashworth, for example, has repeatedly rejected the idea of dark tourism and has alternatively proposed that slavery should be considered in relation to his concept of 'dissonant heritage' instead. Graham M. S. Dann and A. V. Seaton argue that thanatourism, dark tourism, and dissonant heritage 'may be regarded as complementary and as offering a cumulative framework within which to locate and deal with the particular questions raised by slavery heritage', but contend that none of these areas has 'satisfactorily contextualized' slavery tourism.[45] Michael S. Bowman and Phaedra C. Pezzullo identify the difficulty in differentiating between heritage sites and dark tourism sites by questioning the specific point at which a plantation tour transitions from one to the other.[46] More recently, Aaron Yankholmes and Bob McKercher have argued that considering slavery within a thanatourism/dark tourism structure oversimplifies the issues and fails to account for the subject's subtleties.[47] Because of these differences of opinion, slavery-based dark tourism studies should be considered alongside slavery-based heritage tourism studies in order to comprehensively understand the contribution to these two bodies of research.

Following seminal work from Seaton in 1996, which extensively detailed slavery heritage in Ghana, the foray into slavery studies within a framework of dark tourism began in 2001. In this year, Dann and Seaton released an edited collection of papers examining slavery heritage (within the framework of contested heritage, thanatourism, and dark tourism) based on a conference exploring the same topic.[48] Dann and Seaton's introduction

[45] Graham M. S. Dann and A. V. Seaton, 'Slavery, Contested Heritage and Thanatourism', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2.3-4 (2001), 1-29 (pp. 25, 27).
[46] Bowman and Pezzullo, 'What's so "Dark" about "Dark Tourism"?', pp. 190-191.
[47] Yankholmes and McKercher, 'Rethinking Slavery Heritage Tourism'; Light, 'Progress in Dark Tourism and Thanatourism Research'.
[48] The conference *Plantations of the Mind* was held at the College of Charleston in April 2000. This book was co-published simultaneously with an issue of *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* (Volume 2; Numbers 3-4), so all the chapters of the book also appear as journal articles in this issue. It should be noted that this issue of the journal was released in late 2001, but the book was not published until January 2002. For this reason, references to the chapters from the book will be labeled as such and marked 2002, while references to the journal article versions of the chapters will be labelled as such and marked 2001. Moreover, not all the chapters in this book (or their journal article counterparts) examine slavery within a dark tourism framework. Those that do not do so consider them in the broader framework

to the book explained the ways that slavery heritage could be situated among these concepts, while also contributing a unique parallel history of slavery and tourism.[49] Stemming from this broad analysis of slavery heritage, most works in this area have focused on specific sites and regions. Three studies—two from the aforementioned collection and the other released eight years later—have provided analyses on slavery heritage in Britain. A study by John G. Beech compared slavery representation in English cities and offered the useful concept of 'maritimization'; in the same collection, Seaton produced a comparative analysis of the development and nature of slavery heritage in the US and Britain, while conceptualizing the 'Force Field' model to help better scholarly understanding of stakeholders of black history museums.[50] Several years later Alan Rice furthered this research by examining representations of slavery and the slave trade in Lancaster and Manchester through the lens of dark tourism, placing particular emphasis on the civic decisions and public opinions that accompany changes to the commemorative landscape.[51]

Building upon the earlier examples of studies by Nathan K. Austin (who examined the nature of visitation at Ghana's Cape Coast Castle) and M. S. Graham and Robert B. Potter (who explored the 'touristisation' of slavery heritage in Barbados), more recent studies have focused on other regions in the Atlantic world. Slavery sites in West Africa receive considerable attention from scholars, and slave castles, Ghana's Slave River, and Senegal's Gorée Island have been examined from angles such as site management, tourist motivations, and historical representations.[52] Some studies have also applied dark tourism

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of heritage tourism and were discussed in the previous section of this literature review. See: Graham M. S. Dann and A. V. Seaton (eds), *Slavery, Contested Heritage and Thanatourism* (London: Routledge, 2002).

[49] Dann and Seaton, 'Slavery, Contested Heritage and Thanatourism'.

[50] Beech, 'The Marketing of Slavery Heritage in the United Kingdom'; A. V. Seaton, 'Sources of Slavery-Destinations of Slavery: The Silences and Disclosures of Slavery Heritage in the UK and US', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2.3-4 (2001), 107-129.

[51] Alan Rice, 'Museums, Memorials and Plantation Houses in the Black Atlantic: Slavery and the Development of Dark Tourism'. In Richard Sharpley and Philip R. Stone (eds), *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism* (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2009), 224-246.

[52] See for example: Nathan K. Austin, 'Managing Heritage Attractions: Marketing Challenges at Sensitive Historical Sites', *International Journal of Tourism Research* 4 (2002), 447-457; Rice, 'Museums, Memorials

to slavery sites in Central American countries like Barbados, Haiti, and Guadeloupe, often focusing on the commodification of slavery heritage in this region.[53] All of these studies, which often examine more than one site (though not necessarily within a comparative framework), tend to focus on two central themes: the sites themselves (how they are managed, how histories are presented, and how they are marketed) and those who visit them (tourist motivations, behaviors, and experiences).

MEMORY STUDIES

Though this thesis does not engage extensively with the field of memory studies, it does draw from literature on the collective memory of African-American history.[54] The concept of 'collective memory' was first introduced in Maurice Halbwachs' *La memoire collective* in 1950. In his influential research, Halbwachs argued that individual memories rely on the social groups with which each person is associated. In this way, then, Halbwachs concluded that individual and collective memory are closely related and the latter is shaped by the former. More recent scholarship tends to disagree with Halbwach's argument. For example, Marita Sturken argues that 'collective remembering of a culture may be similar to the memory of the individual because it gives a sense of cultural identity and importance to the past.'[55] Jeffrey K. Olick points out the subjectivity of memory when he argues that

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and Plantation Houses in the Black Atlantic'; Rasul A. Mowatt and Charles H. Chancellor, 'Visiting Death and Life: Dark Tourism and Slave Castles', *Annals of Tourism Research* 38.4 (2011), 1410-1434; Forsdick, 'Travel, Slavery, Memory'; Yankholmes and McKercher, 'Rethinking Slavery Heritage Tourism'; Henry Boateng, Abednego Feehi Okoe, and Robert Ebo Hinson, 'Dark Tourism: Exploring Tourist's Experience at the Cape Coast Castle, Ghana', *Tourism Management Perspectives* 27 (2018), 104-110.

[53] M. S. Graham and Robert B. Potter, 'Supplanting the Planters: Hawking Heritage in Barbados', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2.3-4 (2001), 51-84; Forsdick, 'Travel, Slavery, Memory'.

[54] Collective memory (or similar concepts) can also be referred to as 'social memory', 'public memory', 'historical memory', 'popular memory', or 'cultural memory'.

[55] Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 1. Shawn J. Parry-Giles and Trevor Parry-Giles, on the other hand, distinguish between collective and individual memory more explicitly, correlating these elements to the public and private spheres (respectively). They write: 'Unlike individual memory, which is often only present in thought or confined to documents reserved for private consumption, collective memory is public; it is the publicity of collective memory that establishes its political/rhetorical

'subjective perceptions of individuals' is central to this process.[56] David Berliner, on the other hand, has questioned whether people are actually capable of the remembering the past.[57] These types of arguments—as well as many others—have comprised a rich literature concerning the capacities, characteristics, and conceptions of collective memory. Though I have considered these arguments, this thesis conceptualizes collective memory as a generalized (and, within this generalization, a problematic) public understanding of a historical era, person, or event, sometimes conflicting with the academic history produced by scholars—a disparity discussed in slavery and civil rights historiography.

The creation of the collective memory of African-American history has been of particular interest to my research. The study of memory in African-American historical commemoration began in the 1990s, when academics began to apply memory studies to research conducted in the African-American historical field. A 1992 article by Fath Davis Ruffins began to research the relationship between black history and memory, focusing on the role of myth and memory in creating black historical narratives.[58] This topic received exclusive attention in *History and Memory in African-American Culture*—a 1994 book edited by Genevieve Fabre and Robert O'Meally—in which a collection of essays explore different eras, theories, geographies, and ideologies in relation to the collective memory of black history.[59] Research by James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton considerably

power.' See: Shawn J. Parry-Giles and Trevor Parry-Giles, 'Collective Memory, Political Nostalgia, and the Rhetorical Presidency: Bill Clinton's Commemoration of the March on Washington, August 28, 1998', *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 86 (2000), 417-437 (p. 418).

[56] Jeffrey K. Olick, 'Collective Memory: The Two Cultures', *Sociological Theory* 17.3 (1999), 338-348 (p. 341).

[57] David Berliner, 'The Abuses of Memory: Reflections on the Memory Boom in Anthropology', *Anthropological Quarterly* 78.1 (2005), 197-211. Similarly, Stephen H. Browne questions whether a unified public memory can exist, writing: 'Can we now, if ever we could, even speak of *a* public memory, for can anything so contingent and contested ever be theorized in the singular?' Benjamin Filene echoes this argument, writing that not 'all the members of a given public could share [an] identical set of memories'. See: Stephen H. Browne, 'Reading, Rhetoric, and the Texture of Public Memory', *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81 (1995), 237-265 (p. 237); Benjamin Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), p. 5.

[58] Fath Davis Ruffins, 'Mythos, Memory, and History: African American Preservation Efforts, 1820-1990'. In Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer, and Steven Lavine (eds), *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).

[59] Genevieve Fabre and Robert O'Meally (eds), *History and Memory in African-American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

advanced academic understanding of the popular memory of slavery in America, and their edited collection *Slavery and Public History* brought together numerous essays on the topic.[60] Two monographs published in the early 2000s frame race, memory, identity, and culture within a southern framework. Whereas W. Fitzhugh Brundage focuses on these themes broadly against a southern backdrop, David Blight limits his scope to the legacy and memory of the Civil War.[61] In a 2004 article, Ira Berlin expertly dissects the disparities between history and memory, focusing on the history of slavery specifically but also remarking on the past more broadly.[62] Moreover, a wide-reaching edited collection by Leigh Raiford and Renee C. Romano entitled *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory* includes research on the way the civil rights era is remembered, contested, and adapted to modern norms.[63] These studies, in addition to numerous others, have contributed greatly to the field of black public history, providing extensive insight into the many ways that memory is formed and re-formed in the United States.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The main chapters of this thesis examine the content of four museums and the methods used to display history, cultures, and experiences. To underpin these observations, these analyses rely on African-American historiography. In addition to questioning whether or not museums reflect trends in the historiographic field, this thesis also considers the role of museums when the academic history and memory conflict. The way that museums address

[60] James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (New York: New Press, 2006).
[61] W. Fitzhugh Brundage (ed.), *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).
[62] Ira Berlin, 'American Slavery in History and Memory and the Search for Social Justice', *The Journal of American History* 90.4 (2004), 1251-1268.
[63] Leigh Raiford and Renee C. Romano (eds), *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2006).

these conflicts impacts their self-defined role and speaks to their aims and priorities as educational institutions.

Studies exploring the history of African-American historical preservation and dissemination have been used significantly throughout this thesis—particularly in the 'Museum Backgrounds' chapter. Histories detailing this topic began in the 1980s. Articles by Bettye Collier-Thomas, Jeffrey C. Stewart, and Fath Davis Ruffins provided early overviews of black historical collection and dissemination in America during the 19th and 20th centuries.[64] Also in the 1980s, Amina J. Dickerson, James Oliver Horton, and Spencer Crew took different approaches in conducting research that made significant contributions to the understanding of black history museums.[65] Like Collier-Thomas, Stewart, and Ruffins, Dickerson provides a brief overview of black historical preservation, but she largely focuses on the direction for African-American museums moving forward from the mid-1980s. Horton and Crew's essay takes a different view, focusing on mainstream history museums and the omission or inclusion of black history in their exhibits.

In the 1990s, studies by John E. Fleming, Spencer Crew, Fath Davis Ruffins, and Paul Ruffins continued to expand research undertaken within the field of black museum studies.[66] This research extended scholarly understanding of the origins of black history preservation and dissemination, as well as producing convincing arguments about the

[64] Bettye Collier-Thomas, 'An Historical Overview of Black Museums and Institutions with Museum Functions, 1800-1980', *Negro History Bulletin* 44.3 (1981), 84-86; Jeffrey C. Stewart and Fath Davis Ruffins, 'A Faithful Witness: Afro-American History in Historical Perspective, 1828-1984'. In Susan Porter Benson, Steven Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig (eds), *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 307-336.

[65] Amina J. Dickerson, 'African-American Museums: A Past Filled with Pride, A Future Filled with Challenges', *Journal of Arts Management and Law* 18.2 (1988), 34-61; James Oliver Horton and Spencer R. Crew, 'Afro-Americans and Museums: Towards a Policy of Inclusion'. In Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig (eds), *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 215-236.

[66] John E. Fleming, 'African-American Museums, History, and the American Ideal', *The Journal of American History* 81.3 (1994), 1020-1026; Spencer Crew, 'African Americans, History and Museums: Preserving American History in the Public Arena'. In Gaynor Kavanagh (ed.), *Making Histories in Museums* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1996), 80-91; Fath Davis Ruffins and Paul Ruffins, 'Recovering Yesterday: An Overview of the Collection and Preservation of Black History', *Black Issues in Higher Education* 13.25 (1997), 16-22.

historical and modern importance of African-American history museums. In 2008 archivist Mary Jo Fairchild built upon this foundation by closely examining the museum movement of the 1960s and offering an updated overview of the state of black history museums in the 21st century.[67] Finally, Mabel O. Wilson and Andrea Burns have recently devoted entire monographs to exploring the importance of expositions and world fairs in black historical representation (*Negro Building*) and the history of the museum movement, with a focus on four early neighborhood museums and their link to the black power era (*From Storefront to Monument*).[68] All of these contributions rounded out the history of black museums, allowing scholars to move into more specific areas within African-American museum studies.

RELEVANT THEMES, DEBATES, AND ARGUMENTS

Within these fields, there are three topics that have been particularly useful for my research—heritage and history, education and entertainment, and authenticity. These topics have been debated in different fields, most prominently museum studies and tourism studies. The interdisciplinary nature of these debates lends itself better to a thematic examination as opposed to a field-specific discussion in the previous section, wherein each debate would be too restricted within the limitations of that specific field rather than embracing the ways that these discussions have transcended individual disciplines to produce multi-faceted ideas of the concepts most central to this thesis. Though this overview will not be comprehensive due to space constraints, this section will briefly

[67] Mary Jo Fairchild, 'The African American Museum Movement: New Strategies in the Battle for Equality in the Twentieth Century', *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association* (2008), 5-14.
[68] Mabel O. Wilson, *Negro Building: Black Americans in the Wold of Fairs and Museums* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Andrea Burns, *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013).

outline the way that each of these areas have developed and how these arguments are applicable to my research.

Heritage and History

Though 'heritage' and 'history' are often used as interchangeable terms in public discourse, they are distinct concepts with different meanings, purposes, and impacts. Various explanations have been provided in academic discussions about the disparities between the two terms, but they tend to adhere to the general principle that history is an objective recounting of the past (or, more specifically, a striving toward objectivity), while heritage is a subjective reproduction of that past that changes based on current needs and attitudes.[69] J. E. Tunbridge and G. J. Ashworth, for example, argue that 'history is what a historian regards as worth recording and heritage is what contemporary society chooses to inherit and to pass on'.[70] Adding a monetary element to the definition, Frans F. J. Schouten writes: 'Heritage is history processed through mythology, ideology, nationalism, local pride, romantic ideas or just plain marketing, into a commodity.'[71]

This thesis defines heritage as a combination of these two ideas. While commodification, which is at the core of debates concerning education/entertainment and authenticity, is often an element of heritage, it is not inherently so. The heritage associated with the Lost Cause of the Confederacy, for example, may have some commodification purposes, but its roots lie in the creation of an alternative history aimed at justifying the Civil War and controlling the portrayal of the South in historical and cultural narratives. In this way, then, heritage is a historical narrative that is socially, politically, or culturally

[69] Of course the creation and dissemination of history is never entirely objective, as even the selection, emphasis, and prioritization of some facts over others is a subjective process. For more on this, see the 'Museum Backgrounds' chapter.
[70] Tunbridge and Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage*, p. 6.
[71] Schouten, 'Heritage as Historical Reality', p. 21.

reconstructed for purposes such as commodification, historical justification, cultural identity, or political pursuit.

The distinguishing characteristic of heritage is its malleable connection to contemporary societal needs. As such, heritage can reveal just as much about the present as it does the past. David Lowenthal explains the complex relationship between heritage production and the setting against which it occurs:

> *Present needs seemed to reshape past remains in a fashion strikingly analogous to revisions of memory and history…I began to realise that the pasts we alter or invent are as prevalent and consequential as those we try to preserve. Indeed, a heritage wholly saved or authentically reproduced is no less transformed than one deliberately manipulated.*[72]

This dynamic produces several differences between heritage and history. Dann and Seaton point out that heritage 'has to take into account the sensitivities of the present' and that heritage promoters 'must consider how the past "plays" in the present.' Moreover, they argue that while history 'ultimately aims for a comprehensive recounting of the "world of the past"', heritage tends to focus on a 'small slice of that past' that 'relates to given communities in particular places and at specific times.' Thus, they argue, in heritage development 'the choice of an era has to be considered against the backdrop of the present.'[73] The unavoidable influence of present needs, then, results in notable differences between heritage and history.

Additionally, the role of the present in heritage development necessitates the consideration of (and reconciliation with) collective memory in a way that historical development does not. As will be examined in the core chapters of this thesis, major disparities can exist between history and collective memory. As Halbwachs explains, 'the continuous development of collective memory is marked not, as is history, by clearly

[72] David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. xviii.
[73] Dann and Seaton, 'Slavery, Contested Heritage and Thanatourism', p. 26.

etched demarcations but only by irregular and uncertain boundaries.'[74] Yankholmes and McKercher agree, arguing that 'history is absolute (this event happened on this day), but collective memory is more fluid and can get passed from generation to generation, altered or re-interpreted.'[75] Perhaps due to these disparities, there is often a disconnect between academic history and the narratives presented in heritage production.[76]

Place is also important to the formation of memory and heritage. As Pierre Nora writes: 'Memory attaches itself to sites, whereas history attaches itself to events'.[77] If this is true, then heritage connects to places while history connects to occurrences. Similarly, Steven Hoelscher argues: 'It matters a great deal when and where a cultural memory is established, just as the forces that shape it are spatially and temporally contingent.'[78] In this way, heritage—with its links to memory—is intimately connected to place and space, and concepts of heritage will inevitably evolve alongside these elements.

The relationship between place and heritage/history can be considered in greater detail when one considers the historic and contemporary purpose of specific places. For example, Stephen W. Litvin and Joshua David Brewer identify a difference in the representation of slavery in rural plantation homes and urban historic homes. They argue

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[74] Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), p. 82.
[75] Yankholmes and McKercher, 'Rethinking Slavery Heritage', p. 238.
[76] Ira Berlin comments on this disconnect, writing: '[Conflict between the public and historians] is often the case when the question of slavery goes public. The problem is not confined to the subject of slavery, for it arises again and again whenever historians address a subject that, for whatever reason, engages "the people." While such differences are often—and rightly—blamed on poor writing, obscure jargon, or narrow conceptions, there is enough well-written and broadly conceived history to ask why the best scholarship is often viewed as irrelevant; why books that win prizes within the academy go unread by the public; why TV's History Channel has an audience in the millions and university presses publish books in the hundreds. At base, history and memory simply do not mix well. They speak past one another. Their dialogue is uncomfortable and rarely respectful.' See: Berlin, 'American Slavery in History and Memory', p. 1267. For Berlin's full discussion on the tensions between history and memory see pages 1261-1268. For more on the disparity between heritage sites (including museums) and academic scholarship, see for example: Wilton Corkern, 'Heritage Tourism: Where Public and History Don't Always Meet', *American Studies International* 42.2/3 (2004), 7-16; James W. Loewen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York: The New Press, 1999).
[77] Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire', *Representations* 26 (1989), 7-24 (p. 22).
[78] Steven Hoelscher, 'Making Place, Making Race: Performances of Whiteness in the Jim Crow South', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93.3 (2003), 657-686 (p. 660); cites Doreen Massey, 'Places and Their Pasts', *History Workshop Journal* 39 (1995), 182-192.

that varying engagements with slavery at these sites reflects the disparity between history and heritage, noting that plantations prioritize heritage while historic homes prioritize history.[79] Litvin and Brewer's observation demonstrates the way that history and heritage can not only conflict, but how similar sites can prioritize one over the other with remarkably different results.

Identifying the differences between heritage and history is central to understanding the tensions between education and entertainment or the concept of authenticity. Whether one considers history museums to be institutions of history or heritage will determine one's stance on subsequent debates.[80] Those who consider history museums to be institutions of history will be less likely to overlook inauthentic displays or the overshadowing of education by entertainment; instead, they may expect these institutions to shield displays from the effects of profit-driven competitive tourist attractions or current cultural-political attitudes. On the contrary, those who consider history museums as institutions of heritage are likely to accept—if not expect or desire—higher levels of entertainment (even at the expense of education) or displays that adapt to and reflect current attitudes. Thus, museum scholars could benefit from incorporating these debates and situating their analyses within this subjective framework.

Education and Entertainment

In 1978 media analysist Marshall McLuhan wrote: 'It's misleading to suppose there's any basic difference between education and entertainment.'[81] While later scholars have frequently criticized this collision, McLuhan highlighted both the benefits and the

[79] Stephen W. Litvin and Joshua David Brewer, 'Charleston, South Carolina Tourism and the Presentation of Urban Slavery in an Historic Southern City', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 9.1 (2008), 71-84.
[80] It is worth noting that though 'history' is literally in the phrase 'history museum', this does not necessarily mean that the public considers these institutions as sites of history rather than sites of heritage.
[81] Marshall McLuhan, 'Classrooms Without Walls'. In Edmund Carpenter and Marshall McLuhan (eds), *Explorations in Communication, An Anthology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), p. 3.

inevitability of the merging of education and entertainment. Furthermore, his research criticized the distinction between the message and the mode of communication, concluding that the use of multimedia in education creates more commonalities than differences.[82] Decades later, scholars continue to debate the tension that can arise between education and entertainment in museums and heritage sites. This debate on what Perry L. Carter calls 'the divide between *tourism as amusement* and *tourism as memorial*'—alternatively referred to as education/entertainment; pedagogy/entertainment; pedagogy/amusement; edutainment; dark edutainment; and dartainment—has been examined through the lenses of heritage tourism, dark tourism, and museum studies.[83]

Though these debates gained academic traction from the 1980s onward, the challenge of balancing education and entertainment in museums can be traced back centuries. Duncan Light points to 19th century roots of these debates, as different visions arose between French and British organizers of international exhibitions. He explains:

> *These exhibitions were places of display and spectacle, where themes of commerce, industry and empire were presented to a mass audience….However, they were frequently appropriated for popular entertainment, something the organizers had not intended and were far from happy about. In France, a similar practice of* Expositions Universelles *was established from 1855 onwards. Again the aim was mass education, but unlike in Britain where education and entertainment were seen as dichotomous, in France they were regarded as naturally complementary. These* Expositions, *with their elements of informal education, entertainment, fun and enjoyment, and the use of unusual and stimulating media, are clear harbingers of modern heritage interpretation.*[84]

[82] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964); Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967). (Note to reader: The title of the latter book was originally intended to read *The Medium is the Message*, but a publishing error changed 'message' to 'massage'. McLuhan, entertained by the mistake and its ironic relevancy to the content of his book, decided to adopt the new title thereafter.)
[83] Perry L. Carter, 'Where are the Enslaved?: TripAdvisor and the Narrative Landscape of Southern Plantation Museums', *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 11.2 (2016), 235-249 (p. 245).
[84] Light, 'Heritage as Informal Education', pp. 119-120.

Thus, Light points out that these debates are not only centuries old, but that they also reflect cultural attitudes toward the role of entertainment in the process of education.

Kevin Walsh provides further insight into this struggle in early museums. For example, he cites the Philadelphia Museum in the wake of the death of founder Charles Wilson Peale in 1827. When the museum failed to raise sufficient public funds after Peale's death, it became a company motivated by profit, resulting in displays featuring Siamese Twins, the 'Belgian giant', 'Virginia Dwarfs', and other similar attractions. In fact, showman P. T. Barnum ultimately purchased the institution, affirming its new direction toward the spectacular and shocking.[85] Examples such as this demonstrate that the profit-driven entertainment bent has long battled the consciences of the museum that strives for authenticity and education—the wallet versus the soul, so to say.

Though museums and entertainment-centred tourist attractions have traditionally been considered as distinct pursuits, scholars have argued that the differences between the two have faded in recent decades.[86] As Emily Hertzman, David Anderson, and Susan Rowley note:

> *Museums and other tourist attractions increasingly share similar technological features and content, and use similar presentation techniques such as interactivity*

[85] Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 106; cites Gary Kulik, 'Designing the Past: History-Museum Exhibitions from Peale to the Present'. In Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig (eds), *History Museums in the United States* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

[86] See for example: Paul Greenhalgh, 'Education, Entertainment, and Politics: Lessons from the Great International Exhibitions'. In Peter Vergo (ed.), *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion Books, 1989), 74-98; Schouten, 'Heritage as Historical Reality'; George F. Macdonald and Stephen Alsford, 'Museums and Theme Parks: Worlds in Collusion?', *Museum Management and Curatorship* 14.2 (1995), 129-147; Sharon Macdonald, 'Introduction'. In Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (eds), *Theorizing Museums: Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996), 1-18; Julia Harrison, 'Museums and Touristic Expectations', *Annals of Tourism Research* 24.1 (1997), 23-40; Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Irina van Aalst and Inez Boogaarts, 'From Museum to Mass Entertainment: The Evolution of the Role of Museums in Cities', *European Urban and Regional Studies* 9.3 (2002), 195-209; Emily Hertzman, David Anderson, and Susan Rowley, 'Edutainment Heritage Tourist Attractions: A Portrait of Visitors' Experiences at Storyeum', *Museum Management and Curatorship* 23.2 (2008), 155-175;

> *and edutainment, which confuse, rather than clarify, former categories of what constitutes a museum and what constitutes a private-sector tourist attraction.*[87]

In addition to the increased competition with tourist attractions, Schouten points to the impact of television—a 'new kind of illiteracy'—as well as the fact that this exposure has resulted in visitors holding 'much more sophisticated images of their surrounding world' and as a result they demand that this coherence is reflected in museum displays. Consequently, he argues that '[v]isitors are more critical of what is presented to them and are much more outspoken in their opinions.'[88] All of these factors have resulted in the 'hybridization of entertainment and education', a process that 'challeng[es] traditional definitions of what constitutes an educational experience'.[89]

Scholars have responded to the incorporation of entertainment in museums and heritage sites in different ways. Some have voiced scepticism about this method, arguing that entertainment often becomes the dominant factor while education is marginalized.[90] Others point out that this process can also focus too much attention on the presentation method and not enough on the history being represented.[91] Moreover, critics argue that emphasizing entertainment in these sites can produce inaccurate, superficial narratives that sacrifice authenticity.[92] Though the argument that entertainment can be harmful to

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[87] Hertzman, Anderson, and Rowley, 'Edutainment Heritage Tourist Attractions', p. 169.
[88] Schouten, 'Heritage as Historical Reality', pp. 26-27.
[89] Hertzman, Anderson, and Rowley, 'Edutainment Heritage Tourist Attractions', p. 156.
[90] See for example: Gillian Binks, 'Interpretation of Ancient Monuments—Some Current Issues'. In Mike Hughes and Linda Rowley (eds), *The Management and Presentation of Field Monuments* (Oxford: Oxford University Department for External Studies, 1986), 39-45; Peter J. Ames, 'Meshing Mission and Market', *Museums Journal* 88 (1988), 33-36; Peter J. Ames, 'Marketing in Museums: Means or Master of the Mission', *Curator* 32 (1989), 5-15; Robert Lumley, 'Introduction'. In Robert Lumley (ed.), *The Museum Time Machine: Putting Cultures on Display* (London: Routledge, 1988), 1-23; Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*.
[91] See for example: T. Stevens, 'The Visitor—Who Cares? Interpretation and Consumer Relations'. In David L. Uzzell (ed.), *Heritage Interpretation*, Vol. 2 (London: Belhaven, 1989), 103-107 (p. 103); C. G. Screven, 'Exhibitions and Information Centers: Some Principles and Approaches', *Curator* 29 (1986), 109-137; Ames, 'Meshing Mission and Market'; Ames, 'Marketing in Museums'; Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*.
[92] See for example: Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country* (London: Verso, 1985); Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987); J. Geraint Jenkins, *Getting Yesterday Right: Interpreting the Heritage of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992); Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*; N. Costons, 'Plural Funding and the Heritage'. In David L. Uzzell (ed.), *Heritage Interpretation,* Volume 2 (London: Belhaven, 1989), 16-22.

historical representation is popular, some scholars argue that making displays entertaining can have positive educational outcomes. Vergo, for example, argues that even the most entertaining of presentations will have some level of educational value.[93] Similarly, Sharpe writes that entertainment should not be the main objective of historical interpretation, but good interpretation should be entertaining.[94] Lowenthal also defends this process, writing that it is better for visitors to have 'a lighthearted dalliance with the past than a wholesale rejection of it.'[95]

While many scholars have contributed to this debate, some have been critical of it. Light, for example, argues that 'rather than speaking of education *or* entertainment, it may be helpful to talk of the two being intertwined.'[96] Similarly, others have offered new interpretations and solutions. Schouten argues that though museums and heritage sites are growing increasingly entertaining, these sites 'have a special role to fulfil, which cannot be replaced by theme parks.'[97] Adding a new dynamic into the debate, E. Arnold Modlin, Jr., Derek H. Alderman, and Glenn W. Gentry suggest that though some decisions may make a site more entertaining, entertainment may not be the primary driver of these changes. They point to their research on the role of docents in plantation tours, arguing that cultivating emotional connections between the enslaved and modern visitors may inadvertently make tours more entertaining, but will also encourage empathy and educational understanding.[98] In a related study on historic homes in Charleston, Litvin and Brewer argue that intentional narratives may be cultivated to satisfy visitor expectations of the site. In this way, then, didactic sacrifices may be made to achieve visitor satisfaction and, while this may result in

[93] Peter Vergo, 'The Reticent Object'. In Peter Vergo (ed.), *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion Books, 1989), 41-59.
[94] Grant W. Sharpe, 'An Overview of Interpretation'. In Grant W. Sharpe (ed.), *Interpreting the Environment* (New York: John Wiley, 1982), 3-26.
[95] David Lowenthal, 'Conclusion: Dilemmas of Preservation'. In David Lowenthal and Michael Binney (eds), *Our Past Before Us: Why Do We Save It?* (London: Temple Smith, 1981), 213-237 (p. 232).
[96] Light, 'Heritage as Informal Education', p. 130.
[97] Schouten, 'Heritage as Historical Reality', p. 30.
[98] A docent is a guide in a museum or heritage site. Modlin Jr., Alderman, and Gentry, 'Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy', p. 16.

more entertaining narratives, entertainment is not necessarily the ultimate objective of these decisions.[99] These types of arguments serve as a reminder that though a discussion about education and entertainment has many benefits, it is important to remember the nuances of these spaces and, in doing so, refrain from considering these two elements as exclusively dichotomist.

Authenticity

Stephen Frenkel and Judy Walton explain that authenticity is 'a polyvalent concept, presenting different meanings to different people'.[100] The varied connotations with the term 'authenticity' is clear in a survey conducted by Deepak Chhabra, who surveyed approximately 232 curators of heritage museums in Iowa.[101] Each curator surveyed ranked a number of connotations with authenticity on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 indicating that the connotation is 'not very important' to their definition of authenticity and 5 indicating that the connotation is 'very important'). Of the thirteen connotations provided, curators ranked connotations such as 'represent the past', 'should have a documented history', 'should be from the actual period', 'true to the original subject', and 'represent the local community' as the most significant contributors to authenticity; meanwhile, they ranked connotations like 'represent the market demand', 'should be a reproduction of the original', and 'represent the donor values' as the least significant contributors.[102] Correspondingly, these

[99] Litvin and Brewer, 'Charleston, South Carolina Tourism and the Presentation of Urban Slavery in an Historic Southern City', p. 81.
[100] Stephen Frenkel and Judy Walton, 'Bavarian Leavenworth and the Symbolic Economy of a Theme Town', *Geographical Review* 90 (2000), 559-584 (p. 568).
[101] I use 'approximately' because it is not explicitly clear how many curators ultimately responded, but it appears to be 232 curators (a 74% response rate of the 200 curators who were sent the survey [148] in addition to nine more who responded when follow-up calls were made [157] and 75 more who were contacted to seek further clarification [232]). For the results of this study see 'Table 1. Descriptives of All Items' in: Chhabra, 'Positioning Museums on an Authenticity Continuum', p. 436.
[102] The comprehensive list of authenticity connotations, presented in descending order of rating, is as follows: Represent the past (4.49); True to the original subject (4.28); Should have a documented history (4.26); Should be from the actual period (4.24); Represent the local community (4.00); Real not manufactured (3.74); Verified by historians (3.71); Represent the values of the local region (3.66); Should be based upon the history version of the donors (3.48); Should be a reproduction of the original (2.90);

curators ranked the sources used to verify authenticity in the same manner. Of the nine resources presented, curators ranked 'historians', 'historic documents', 'information provided by the donor', and 'photographs' as the most significant sources used to verify authenticity; resources such as 'American Association of Museums' and 'PastPerfect program (software)' were among the least significant verification tools.[103]

Just as Chhabra's curatorial survey revealed that authenticity is often correlated with historical accuracy within museums, academics use the concept of authenticity as a measuring stick against which they can judge whether representations of the past are historically accurate. There is no single definition of 'authenticity', which, according to Muchazondida Mkono, 'has left the door wide open for academics to construct their own definitions and criteria for what passes as authentic.'[104] Some conceptualizations of authenticity have been particularly impactful in establishing theoretical frameworks within the fields of museum studies and tourism studies. For example, in his 1973 and 1976 books, Dean MacCannell proposed the concept of 'staged authenticity', which refers to the varying degrees that local areas are staged for tourist consumption.[105] In 1992 Stephen M. Fjellman coined the term 'distory', which refers to the distortion of the past for touristic purposes.[106] Two years later Edward M. Bruner identified a four-part typology of authenticity, which provides a spectrum along which museums and heritage sites can be

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Represent the donor values (2.90); Represent market demand (2.48); Modified to reflect globalized culture (2.47).

[103] The comprehensive list of verifying resources, presented in descending order of rating, is as follows: Information provided by the donor (4.37); Photographs (4.35); Historic documents (4.32); Historians (4.00); Things related to the specific geographic area of the object (3.92); Book (3.90); Scholars (3.72); American Association of Museums (2.29); PastPerfect (software) (2.17).

[104] Muchazondida Mkono, 'Authenticity Does Matter', *Annals of Tourism Research* 39.1 (2011), 480-483 (p. 480). See also: Mary Conran, 'Commentary: Beyond Authenticity: Exploring Intimacy in the Touristic Encounter in Thailand', *Tourism Geographies* 8.3 (2006), 247-285.

[105] Dean MacCannell, 'Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings', *American Journal of Sociology* 79.3 (1973), 589-603; Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976).

[106] Stephen M. Fjellman, *Vinyl Leaves: Walt Disney World and America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992). Similarly, Timothy and Boyd identify several forms of distorted pasts, all of which, they argue, are created by economic and business processes, political pressures, and tourist expectations: invented places, relative authenticity, ethnic intruders, sanitised/idealised pasts, and the unknown past. See: Dallen J. Timothy and Stephen W. Boyd, *Heritage Tourism* (Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2003), pp. 244-254.

placed depending on their authenticity.[107] These, along with many other conceptualizations, have shaped academic understanding of authenticity and provided the terminology needed to trace authenticity in historical sites.

Thus, many scholars use authenticity and accuracy as interchangeable terms; in fact, 'accurate' is often used in the definition of 'authenticity'.[108] Existing conceptualizations of authenticity have resulted in significant contributions to the fields of museum studies and tourism studies, helping academics better understand the ways that histories can be staged for consumption, the relationship between the perception and reality of historical narratives, and the expectations of visitors to these sites. Though these examinations are insightful, the alignment of accuracy and authenticity can neglect a more nuanced space between these two concepts.

This thesis conceptualizes authenticity in an entirely different way, considering it alongside established historiography (as close to the recovery of objective historical truths as is possible). In this research, authenticity will refer to the proportionate and factual representation of history, whereas accuracy will refer to a factual representation that disproportionately emphasizes certain aspects of the historical narrative. When narratives are accurate but not authentic, it is often due to the hyper-focus on the spectacular, the extreme, or the famous, and can produce narratives that are more entertaining or that pander to collective memory, political climates, or cultural attitudes. This thesis argues that it is not inherently problematic to represent more extreme or recognizable elements of

[107] Bruner's typology has four categories: the first refers to sites that have been reproduced but that strive to look and function as originally as possible; the second is a flawless reproduction of a historical site; the third is a site that is original, rather than reproduced, reconstructed, or copied; and the fourth refers to authorized historic sites that have been given official or legal recognition. See: Edward M. Bruner, 'Abraham Lincoln as Authentic Reproduction: A Critique of Post-Modernism', *American Anthropologist* 96.2 (1994), 397-415 (pp. 399-400).

[108] For example, Timothy and Boyd write: 'Authenticity is associated with portraying the past in an accurate manner.' See: Timothy and Boyd, *Heritage Tourism*, p. 237.

historical narratives, but rather that the verisimilitude involved in this process can misleadingly convey notions of the past that are more myth than history.

Though this distinction has not been explicitly made in examinations of authenticity in black history sites, some studies have implicitly engaged with aspects of this concept. For example, in their study on the role of docents in plantation museums, Modlin, Alderman, and Gentry argue that when these tours over-emphasize the extraordinary moments of enslaved life, slaves are further marginalized:

> *While their lives might have been difficult, the focus placed on the extreme moments of their lives further marginalizes the everyday lived moments of enslaved individuals. In the end, the constant, poignant struggles of the enslaved are lost. Forgotten is the tremendous daily burden of living under a violent system, weighted down with thoughts that subjection to this coercive system was an inheritance parents passed to their children*.[109]

This sentiment demonstrates why this thesis considers authenticity and accuracy as distinct concepts—namely, that conceptualizing these two elements as interchangeable neglects the nuance of displays that, though technically correct, do not proportionately present a balanced consideration of the past. This thesis, then, will contribute a new dynamic to the extensive debates on authenticity, suggesting that it be considered not just as a form of historical accuracy, but rather as historical proportionality.[110]

Beyond the conceptualizations of authenticity, it is also worth noting some engagements with this topic in the existing literature that have produced important insight into black historical sites. Conceptualizations questioning what authentic representations look like to different stakeholders and visitors—referred to as 'the malleability of meaning' by Alan Rice and 'relative authenticity' by Dallen J. Timothy and Stephen W. Boyd—

[109] Modlin Jr., Alderman, and Gentry, 'Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy', p. 15.
[110] As such, it should be noted that while all authentic displays are accurate, not all accurate displays are authentic.

provide conclusions that are applicable to black history museums.[111] For example, in an examination of a slave trading fortification in Ghana, Nathan K. Austin found that different groups had varying attitudes toward a wall being whitewashed during renovation.[112] He explains: '[T]he whitewashing…was generally seen by the peoples of African [descent] as an attempt to "…beautify the site." Others less sensitive to the site's history relating to slavery saw it as a true representation of the site during European occupation.'[113] He concludes:

> *[B]ecause presentation, interpretation or restoration, when executed, becomes a part of the site itself, it is untenable in the long run for a historical site of strong emotional significance to different and often opposing groups of people, to be portrayed in its historical totality irrespective of these strong emotions.*[114]

Edward M. Bruner, however, points out that the divide is not merely between black and white—in fact, he makes clear distinctions between the views of Ghanaians and diaspora blacks (those of African descent who do not live in Africa). For example, while diaspora blacks want the Elmina Castle to focus on the transatlantic slave trade, Bruner explains that Ghanaians want the site's narrative to cover the comprehensive history of Elmina. He identifies other differences as well, demonstrating the disparity between the needs of the two groups. Bruner writes:

> *Ghanaians want the castles restored, with good lighting and heating, so they will be attractive to tourists; African Americans want the castles to be as they see them—a cemetery for the slaves who died in the dungeons' inhuman conditions while waiting for the ships to transport them to the Americas. Ghanaians see the castles as festive places; African Americans as somber places.*[115]

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[111] Rice, 'Museums, Memorials and Plantation Houses in the Black Atlantic', p. 225; Timothy and Boyd, *Heritage Tourism*, pp. 247-250.
[112] Negative reactions to refurbishing in slave castles have been shared and documented by Sandra L. Richards and Imahkus Vienna Robinson. See: Richards, 'Cultural Travel to Ghana's Slave Castles'; Imahkus Vienna Robinson, 'Is the Black Man's History Being Whitewashed?', *Uhuru* 9 (1994), 48-50.
[113] Austin, 'Managing Heritage Attractions', p. 452.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Bruner, 'Tourism in Ghana', pp. 292-293.

Thus, while Austin argues that authenticity is subjective, particularly within a racial framework, Bruner points out that this subjectivity runs far deeper than race, extending to areas including nationality and financial objectives.[116] Though originally argued in reference to historic sites, this sentiment is also relevant to African-American history museums, which have numerous stakeholders and visitors, each group with their own set of expectations and experiences.[117]

Another prominent debate relating to authenticity is its relationship with commodification. As Dann and Seaton explain: 'With the bottom line of tourism apparently being profit and that of history seemingly being truth, a delicate course has to be steered through the troubled waters of the authenticity they both purport to share.'[118] In these analyses, scholars consider the dynamic between authenticity and commodification, as well as whether the two elements are inherently at odds with one another. At its worst, scholars have argued that commodification results in the packaging of culture and history for tourist consumption and, in the process, they lose much of their original value; additionally, some argue that the commodification of heritage can emphasize the exotic and spectacular for tourists looking for more exciting experiences—both of these elements can present false narratives and can harm the cultures being represented.[119] More recently, some scholars have argued that this debate is problematic.[120] Bowman and Pezzullo, for

[116] See also: Caryl Philips, *The Atlantic Sound* (London: Faber, 2000); Theresa Singleton, 'The Slave Trade Remembered on the Former Gold and Slave Coasts'. In Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood (eds), *From Slavery to Emancipation in the Atlantic World* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 150-169; Rice, 'Museums, Memorials and Plantation Houses in the Black Atlantic'.
[117] The stakeholders of African-American history museums will be discussed further in the 'Museum Backgrounds' chapter.
[118] Dann and Seaton, 'Slavery, Contested Heritage and Thanatourism', p. 16.
[119] See for example: Roger M. Keesing, 'Creating the Past: Custom and Identity in the Contemporary Pacific', *The Contemporary Pacific* 1 (1989), 19-42; Chris Ryan and John Crotts, 'Carving and Tourism: A Maori Perspective', *Annals of Tourism Research* 24 (1997), 898-918; Davydd J. Greenwood, 'Culture by the Pound: An Anthropological Perspective on Tourism as Cultural Commoditization'. In Valene L. Smith (ed.), *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 171-185; Erik Cohen, 'Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research* 19 (1988), 371-384.
[120] See for example: Bowman and Pezzullo, 'What's so "Dark" about "Dark Tourism"?'; Erik H. Cohen, 'Educational Dark Tourism at an *In Populo* Site: The Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem', *Annals of Tourism Research* 38.1 (2011), 193-209; Gila Oren and Amir Shani, 'The Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum: Educational Dark Tourism in a Futuristic Form', *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 7.3 (2012), 175-190.

example, argue that the dark tourism field 'seems inevitably trapped in questions of authenticity versus commodification, which falsely present the matter of one of either/or'.[121] Though this thesis examines authenticity within a different conceptual framework, these analyses about the link between commodification and historical representations have helped to shape my research.

It is also important to consider authenticity within the frameworks of politics, cultures, and emotions. An anecdote about The Slave House on Gorée Island demonstrates why this framework is important.[122] Boubacar Joseph N'Diaye, the original and (in)famous curator of The Slave House, long promoted the site by suggesting that between 10 and 15 million enslaved Africans passed through this particular location before departing for the Americas. As Ana Lucia Araujo points out, not only is this number inaccurate ('The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database' indicates that 33,562 enslaved Africans left from Gorée Island), but part of N'Diaye's estimate falls outside the total number of enslaved Africans shipped to the Americas (roughly 12.5 million). Despite this, when Philip Curtin questioned these claims, he was criticized for dismissing the importance of slavery, some even arguing that his arguments were comparable to Holocaust negationism. To this criticism Curtin responded: '[T]he fact that not much slave trade took place at Gorée has nothing to do with the horror of the slave trade in general, and that accurate evidence is a

[121] Bowman and Pezzullo, 'What's so "Dark" about "Dark Tourism"?', p. 195.

[122] The Slave House, located on Senegal's Gorée Island, was a slave center during the transatlantic slave trade. It currently serves as a museum and memorial, and it has become a popular site for world leaders like Nelson Mandela, Pope John Paul II, and Presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush, and Bill Clinton. As detailed in the text, despite the symbolism of the site (particularly its Door of No Return), its actual historical significance has been debated. Currently, there is no official museum website, but details of The House of Slaves can be viewed on UNESCO's website. See: 'The House of Slaves', *UNESCO* <http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/?pg=33&s=films_details&id=1333>; For more on the news coverage of The House of Slaves (including the contentiousness surrounding its historical significance) following President Obama's 2013 visit, see for example: Max Fisher, 'What Obama really saw at the "Door of No Return," a disputed memorial to the slave trade', *The Washington Post* (28 June 2013) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/06/28/what-obama-really-saw-at-the-door-of-no-return-a-debunked-memorial-to-the-slave-trade/?utm_term=.eb171e8c4dfa> [accessed on 2 November 2018].

fundamental base to all historical enquiry.'[123] The debates surrounding N'Diaye, Curtin, and the scholars who took umbrage to Curtin's adherence to factual data demonstrates the ways that authenticity is influenced not only by commodification and profits, but also by emotions stemming from sensitive histories and current cultural-political attitudes.

[123] Araujo, 'Welcome the Diaspora', pp. 150-153. For Curtin's original H-Net post see: < http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=H-Slavery&month=9508&week=a&msg=cb0O4UuI%2bT0IeKSltZ5NlA&user=&pw=>. For Curtin's response to the contentious feedback to his original post see: *H-Net* <http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-africa&month=9508&week=c&msg=SuW%2bQPe0tq1CP1ov100osQ&user=&pw=> [accessed on 18 August 2018].

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

Detailed studies on the museum journeys, methods, and narratives of black history museums are largely missing from the field of African-American museum studies. Extensive research has been conducted regarding the background of African-American historical preservation and dissemination, the African-American museum movement, and the origins of individual museums; however, despite these contributions scholars have yet to provide comprehensive and comparative accounts of the ways that these institutions represent black history. Moreover, studies examining the representation of slavery and civil rights in other heritage sites have contributed to scholarly understanding of tourism, cultural geography, and historical commemoration, but the museological representation of these eras remains largely unexplored. The research in this thesis addresses this gap in African-American museum studies, providing a detailed comparative analysis of the methods used by four renowned institutions in their representations of black history, cultures, and experiences.

Furthermore, this thesis serves as one of the first large-scale analyses of the NMAAHC. Though the institution's history has been extensively examined, this study will focus on its representational methods and narratives.[124] Several recent public debates have centered on race relations, and amid these national discussions particular attention has been paid to the opening of this significant museum. It has been at the center of much speculation, emotion, and pride, and it is important for researchers to document the ways in which the NMAAHC has constructed its museum journey and narratives. This thesis documents its opening amid these circumstances and explores how the first federally

[124] For more on the NMAAHC's history, see: Mabel O. Wilson, *Begin with the Past: Building the National Museum of African American History and Culture* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2016).

funded national African-American history museum will present the past within a racially-charged political climate.

This thesis also contributes further understanding to ongoing debates about heritage and history, education and entertainment, and authenticity. These debates have been extensively examined in museum studies and tourism studies literature; however, they have rarely been applied to black history museums. Extending these concepts to the institutions in this study will provide new insight into the ways that black history museums address these challenges. Moreover, this thesis goes a step further than existing debates by narrowing the concept of authenticity in order to differentiate it from historical accuracy.

The museological methods of localization and internationalization are thoroughly examined in this thesis. These methods are prominent in black history museums, but they remain largely under-explored in existing literature. Though some studies have engaged to various extents with either or both of these methods in their analyses of black history museums, scholars have yet to examine localization or internationalization as isolated methods within the framework of black history museums or to identify their benefits or limitations in these settings.[125] This thesis examines museum engagement with local and global connections, providing insight into dominant yet largely under-explored museological methods.

Finally, this thesis demonstrates the importance of extending museum analyses past national borders. Research on the museological representation of African-American history tends to focus solely on American museums; however, the field is lacking research exploring the ways that this history is presented in a non-American institution.[126] This

[125] For research on black history museums that have engaged to some extent with these themes, see for example: Beech, 'The Marketing of Slavery Heritage in the United Kingdom'; Forsdick, 'Travel, Slavery, Memory'; Rice, 'Museums, Memorials and Plantation Houses in the Black Atlantic'.

[126] Several studies have examined representations of Black Atlantic history in various countries within that region; however, in addition to questioning the ways that trans-national slavery narratives are represented in the ISM (which is the method generally used in the aforementioned studies), this thesis also questions

thesis addresses this gap, contributing an original analysis of the representation of African-American history in Liverpool's International Slavery Museum. This broadened scope is particularly useful in African-American museum studies. The eras of slavery and civil rights are intricately connected to histories in other parts of the world, and these intertwined narratives invite non-American museums to incorporate aspects of African-American stories into their own museum displays. This thesis demonstrates the merit of extending the scope of African-American museum studies beyond American museums, which may encourage other scholars to further examine the special relationship between representations of African-American history, the African diaspora, and global struggles for human rights.

how American-specific narratives are represented in this institution. For studies that explore trans-national slavery narratives in Atlantic museums, see footnote 38 in this chapter.

METHODOLOGY

The institutions selected for this thesis were chosen due to their contributions to the public understanding of black history and their variety in geographic placement, opening year, and scope. Geographic variety was a particularly important aspect of the selection process, as these variations provide further comparative opportunities to my analyses. This research focuses on museums in the American South, North/Mid-West, and Mid-Atlantic, as well as one museum in Northwest England. A wide geographic scope produces a thorough examination of themes like localization, nationalization, and internationalization, and provides insight into the relationship between black history museums, place, cultures, and politics. Furthermore, the inclusion of the ISM gives this project a transatlantic approach, which will contribute to the scholarly understanding of how American history is represented in British museums.[127]

The museums in this study opened over a 55-year period (1961-2016), each opening in a distinct era that impacted its museological methods and narratives—an element that will be further explored in the 'Museum Backgrounds' chapter. Disparities in the current state of these museums often correlate with opening years. A 2003 *Ebony* article noted a contemporary museological shift, differentiating existing museums like the DuSable Museum from the developing NMAAHC:

> *Big is in as African-American heritage centers leap into the new millennium with size and style. No longer the one-room exhibits of another millennium, lacking*

[127] It should be noted that a transatlantic comparison requires an acknowledgement of the inherent differences between black historical (particularly slavery) representation in the United States and United Kingdom. A. V. Seaton identifies three primary differences regarding the development and nature of slavery heritage in the two countries. First, he highlights physical evidence of slavery, arguing that greater availability and easier access to slavery artifacts in the United States lends itself better to heritage development. Second, Seaton points to the difference in size (both in proportion to populations and in absolute numbers) of the black community in each country, as well as the ways that settlement patterns have produced different relationships between modern black communities and slavery heritage. Finally, he compares the role of slavery in official versions of national histories, arguing that the era plays a more overt, undeniable role in US history and, as such, this prominence translates into the development of heritage sites. These points are well taken and research in this thesis has been conducted with an awareness of these disparities. See: Seaton, 'Sources of Slavery—Destinations of Slavery', pp. 116-121.

> *funds, curators and collections, today's African-American museums are major affairs, with major funding, multi-thousand square feet facilities and professional directors and curators.*[128]

As indicated in this excerpt, black history museums built more recently may have an immediate head start ahead of older establishments, as they are launched with more professionally-trained leadership and greater levels of funding. As such, selecting museums that were established in different periods will contribute to the comparative component of this thesis, allowing for the examination of the temporal relationship between institutions.

Finally, these museums examine different periods of black history, with one focusing on the slavery era, one on the civil rights era, and two on the full spectrum of African-American history. The DuSable and NMAAHC examine the same timeline, though they do so within different contexts of space, funding, and quality. Incorporating these institutions allows this thesis to compare the ways that two general African-American history museums represent black history, including what they choose to engage with along the centuries-long timeline, what has been omitted, and whether curators approach these narratives chronologically or thematically. On the other hand, the inclusion of two period-specific institutions, the BCRI and ISM, allows this thesis to question how curators approach narrower scopes of history. Comparing period-specific institutions provides insight into the thematic breakdown of narrowly-defined historical periods, the willingness of curators to venture outside of these timelines in order to contextualize or highlight important connections, and the extent to which period-specific museums offer opportunities for detailed narratives. Overall, comparing institutions with broad and narrow scopes not only examines how histories are represented in each institution, but also highlights the dynamic between depth and breadth in black history museums.

[128] 'Memories in Stone and Steel: Black museums and sites give new dimensions to Black History Year', *Ebony* (February 2003), 52-59 (pp. 53, 56).

The central approach to the core chapters of this thesis is critical comparative analysis. This method will ensure that museums are evaluated not only within their own context, but within a broader comparative framework that questions the ways that history is represented (or, also significant, is not represented) in a variety of museums. This process demonstrates the different ways that museums can represent the same historical narratives, while also allowing room for critique and impact evaluation. Given this central thesis method, it was important that museums with spatial and temporal variety were selected for this study. The diversity of the place and time of these institutions lends itself well to comparative analysis and encourages the consideration of elements like localization, internationalization, political climates, and local culture within these analyses. Additionally, the selection of two broad museums and two period-specific museums ensures that in most cases only two or three museums are compared at one time, which allows for effective comparison without convolution.

These analyses are based on a research trip taken in September 2016 and a follow-up trip to Washington, D.C. in September 2017.[129] Taken over a three-week period, the initial research trip included visits to the four primary museums in this study, as well as several other African-American history museums.[130] This trip was insightful, helping me to

[129] This research is in addition to numerous trip taken to Liverpool's ISM, which is locally accessible.
[130] I drove roughly 2,000 miles and visited six states (in addition to Washington, D.C. and several more states that I drove through en route) on my first research trip. I spent time at the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site (Atlanta, GA), the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (Birmingham, AL), the Civil Rights Trail (Montgomery, AL; includes the Rosa Parks Museum, the Alabama State Capitol, and the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, among other sites), the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel (Memphis, TN), the Griot Museum (St. Louis, MO), the DuSable Museum of African American History (Chicago, IL), and the National Museum of African American History and Culture (Washington, D.C.). The trip concluded in Washington, D.C., where I attended the NMAAHC's opening weekend Dedication Ceremony. My next research trip focused solely on Washington, D.C. and Virginia, and the purpose of this trip was to visit the NMAAHC once the initial crowds had somewhat reduced. In addition to visiting the NMAAHC, I also observed the representations of slavery at the U.S. Capitol Building (Washington, D.C.), Mount Vernon (Mt. Vernon, VA), and Monticello (Charlottesville, VA). See: 'Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site', *NPS* <https://www.nps.gov/malu/index.htm>; *Birmingham Civil Rights Institute* <https://www.bcri.org/>; 'Montgomery', *United States Civil Rights Trail* <https://civilrightstrail.com/destination/montgomery/>; *National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel* <http://www.civilrightsmuseum.org/>; *The Griot Museum of Black History and Culture* <https://www.thegriotmuseum.com/>; *DuSable Museum of African American History* <https://www.dusablemuseum.org/>; *National Museum of African American History and Culture* <https://nmaahc.si.edu/>; *U.S. Capitol Visitor Center* <https://www.visitthecapitol.gov/>; *George*

better understand African-American history museums, their content, their origins, and their modern state. Visiting both large and small museums provided a foundational education about the ways that these museums work and the challenges that they face. Perhaps most importantly, this trip allowed me to interact with surrounding communities and to observe local commemorative landscapes, cultures, and political attitudes. These experiences greatly contributed to my analysis of the relationship between black history museums, place, culture, and politics. Cultural geography is a significant aspect of African-American museum studies, and though it is not the overt focus of this thesis, this understanding helped to place each institution within its local context.[131]

In addition to my analyses of these institutions, when possible I have underpinned these arguments with museum reviews. Because this thesis focuses more on the ways that historical narratives are represented rather than the way those representations are received by visitors, reviews do not play a dominant role in the analytical chapters. They do, however, provide insight into the impact of these display methods, as well as aiding the comparative component of this thesis. The reviews used during the research process stem from two sources—professional reviews published in newspapers or journals and informal reviews written on TripAdvisor. Both methods have different benefits and drawbacks, and using them together reveals the ways that different groups interpret museum displays.

Professional reviews of these institutions are generally written by cultural critics, museum critics, or academics and, as such, do not necessarily represent the opinions of ordinary visitors.[132] Given the analytical tone of these reviews, they complement existing literature that dissects museological debates, methods, and critical analyses. Moreover, the

Washington's Mount Vernon <https://www.mountvernon.org/>; *Monticello* <https://home.monticello.org/>.

[131] For more on cultural geography and African-American studies, see the discussion of commemorative landscape research on pages 21-23 of this chapter (particularly footnotes 38 and 39).

[132] 'Ordinary' in this section refers to tourist or residential museum visitors who are not experts in African-American history, museum studies, racial representation, or any similar areas of expertise.

astute and erudite nature of professional reviews provides critical, developed arguments that are not available in informal feedback. Unfortunately, professional reviews tend to focus more on newer institutions whose openings have garnered public attention, which results in an uneven availability for the temporally-varied museums in this thesis. For these reasons, museum reviews in newspapers and journals contribute significantly to this study, but they are not without their limitations.

Whereas professional reviews can demonstrate the ways that critics and academics interpret museums, informal feedback sites like TripAdvisor provide insight into more ordinary museum experiences. TripAdvisor is the world's largest travel site with approximately 702 million reviews covering roughly eight million establishments.[133] While there are numerous other user-generated content (UGC) websites with which this thesis could have engaged, I have chosen to use the reviews on TripAdvisor due to the site's breadth and credibility, and for the sake of consistency.[134] The quantity of museum reviews is not spread evenly across the four institutions in this study; on the contrary, they seem to correlate with the appeal and popularity of each museum. Despite this, there are still a robust number of responses even for the least reviewed museums in this study. As of November 2018, TripAdvisor hosts 2,601 reviews for the National Museum of African American History and Culture, 1,087 for the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, 1,081 for the International Slavery Museum, and 76 for the DuSable Museum of African American History.[135]

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[133] 'About TripAdvisor', *TripAdvisor* <https://www.tripadvisor.mediaroom.com/us-about-us> [accessed on 17 November 2018].

[134] This is not to imply that there have not been credibility issues with TripAdvisor reviews. There have indeed been problems with trust and credibility, and these issues will be highlighted in this section. These types of concerns, however, are not unique to TripAdvisor and are unavoidable on UGC websites.

[135] These numbers are constantly growing as more visitors attend and review each institution, but I have incorporated reviews through November 2018. See: 'DuSable Museum of African American History', *TripAdvisor* <https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g35805-d144244-Reviews-DuSable_Museum_of_African_American_History-Chicago_Illinois.html> [accessed on 30 November 2018]; 'Birmingham Civil Rights Institute', *TripAdvisor* < https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g30375-d106398-Reviews-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html> [accessed on 30 November 2018]; 'National Museum of African American History and Culture', *TripAdvisor*

Several studies evaluate the merits and concerns of UGC sites like TripAdvisor, and their credibility for academic research is evident in the site's prominent position in a growing number of hospitality and tourism studies.[136] While visitor feedback takes a secondary role in this thesis, these reviews provide insight that cannot be attained by professional museum critics, journalists, or academics. Instead, they reveal average experiences that better reflect the opinions of museum audiences. While newspaper reviews can sometimes be complex or extensive, museum reviews from TripAdvisor are direct and brief. Moreover, the anonymity of this type of platform allows users to freely express their honest opinions about these institutions—a quality that would not necessarily be true of interviews conducted on site or feedback collected by museum staff.

Finally, these reviews provide opinions that are lacking in some area newspapers. While journalists seem to be comfortable criticizing new institutions (like the NMAAHC), articles discussing more established museums (like the DuSable) often feel more restrained—perhaps due to respect or sympathy—even if there are glaring issues that need to be addressed.[137] Ordinary visitors, particularly through a third-party platform like

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<https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g28970-d10895065-Reviews-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_of.html> [accessed on 30 November 2018]; 'International Slavery Museum', *TripAdvisor* <https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g186337-d1138078-Reviews-International_Slavery_Museum-Liverpool_Merseyside_England.html> [accessed on 30 November 2018].

[136] For studies that evaluate the merits, concerns, or credibility of UCG sites like TripAdvisor, see for example: Julian K. Ayeh, Norman Au, and Rob Law, '"Do We Believe in TripAdvisor?" Examining Credibility Perceptions and Online Travelers' Attitude toward Using User-Generated Content', *Journal of Travel Research* 52.4 (2013), 437-452; Hee 'Andy' Lee, Rob Law, and Jamie Murphy, 'Helpful Reviewers in TripAdvisor, an Online Travel Community', *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 28.7 (2011), 675-688. For studies that research museums or the tourist industry using TripAdvisor as a methodology tool, see for example: Ana Souto, 'Experiencing memory museums in Berlin. The Otto Weidt Workshop for the Blind Museum and the Jewish Museum Berlin', *Museum & Society* 16.1 (2018), 1-27; Carter, 'Where are the enslaved?'; Yaohua Su, 'Contemplating museums' service failure: Extracting the service quality dimensions of museums from negative online reviews', *Tourism Management* 69 (2018), 214-222.

[137] As previously noted, modern reviews devote more time to new museums than to established museums; however, even in the scant reviews that are available for established institutions, there is often a disparity in criticality. For a prime example of this, compare the levels of critique in the following two articles: Philip Kennicott, 'The African American Museum tells powerful stories—but not as powerfully as it could', *Washington Post* (14 September 2016) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/the-african-american-museum-tells-powerful-stories--but-in-a-disjointed-way/2016/09/14/b7ba7e4c-7849-11e6-bd86-b7bbd53d2b5d_story.html?utm_term=.07831ff997f3> [accessed on 18 August 2018]; Steve Johnson, 'DuSable Museum of African American History: Filling your mind, not your day', *Chicago Tribune* (17 September 2014) <http://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/museums/ct-ent-0918-museum-

TripAdvisor, tend to speak more openly about their concerns, and this honesty offers useful information for museum analyses. In these ways, using informal museum feedback from TripAdvisor has unique benefits that cannot be provided by professional reviews.

Of course, there are risks of relying too uncritically on UGC sites like TripAdvisor. Credibility is key to these experience-sharing platforms, and it is difficult to verify the identity and intent of each user. Inauthentic reviews could stem from vindictive users (who provide an unwarranted negative review) or from users with a fake account (for example, a worker who floods the feedback with positive reviews through a number of accounts of various 'visitors'). In fact, TripAdvisor has been in the news in recent years due to questions of libel, lawsuits, and trust claims.[138] The site has worked toward minimizing these types of issues—for example, in response to concerns about fake users the site has enacted a process in which users can rate the reputation of other users, as well as enabling a 'helpfulness' rating on each review—but it is important to be aware that problems with UGC websites will likely persist despite these efforts.[139]

101-dusable-20140917-story.html> [accessed on 18 August 2018]. This seems to be particularly true of area newspapers; for example, while *The Economist* criticizes the current state of the DuSable, local papers like the *Chicago Tribune, Chicago Crusader*, *Chicago Business,* and *Chicago Sun-Times* tends to either ignore the institution, publish fairly positive reviews, or focus on administrative issues rather than the quality of the exhibits. See for example: 'A Fresh Start', *The Economist* (10 September 2015) <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2015/09/10/a-fresh-start> [accessed on 1 November 2018]; Johnson, 'DuSable Museum of African American History'; 'The DuSable bounces back as number of visitors surges', *Chicago Crusader* (3 February 2017) <https://chicagocrusader.com/dusable-bounces-back-number-visitors-surges/> [accessed on 1 November 2018]; Lisa Bertagnoli, 'Inside the meltdown at a pillar of Chicago's black civic life', *Chicago Business* (1 June 2018) <https://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20180601/NEWS07/180609973/chance-the-rapper-theaster-gates-leave-dusable-museum-board-cfo-exits> [accessed on 1 November 2018]; Mary Mitchell, 'Mitchell: DuSable Museum fight exposes generation gap', *Chicago Sun-Times* (18 July 2015) <https://chicago.suntimes.com/columnists/mitchell-dusable-museum-fight-exposes-generation-gap/> [accessed on 1 November 2018].

[138] See for example: Harry Wallop, 'TripAdvisor faces legal action from upset hoteliers', *Telegraph* (11 September 2010) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/travelnews/7994817/TripAdvisor-faces-legal-action-from-upset-hoteliers.html> [accessed on 15 August 2018]; Kira Cochrane, 'Why TripAdvisor is getting a bad review', *The Guardian* (25 January 2011) <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2011/jan/25/tripadvisor-duncan-bannatyne> [accessed on 15 August 2018]; Marnie Hunter, 'TripAdvisor scolded by UK ad regulator for "trust" claims', *CNN* (1 February 2012) <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/tripadvisor-advertising-uk/index.html> [accessed on 15 August 2018]; Natalie Paris, 'TripAdvisor: can users be sued for bad reviews?', *Telegraph* (12 September 2013) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/news/TripAdvisor-can-users-be-sued-for-bad-reviews/> [accessed on 15 August 2018].

[139] Lee, Law, and Murphy, 'Helpful Reviewers in TripAdvisor', p. 676.

Concerns such as these should not prevent academics from engaging with TripAdvisor and similar platforms, but the awareness of these platforms' weaknesses is an essential component of this methodological process. Overall, this research has benefited from the combined use of formal and informal reviews. Utilizing professional and TripAdvisor reviews in tandem has allowed one to balance the other, each providing strengths to complement the other's limitations. Together, they demonstrate the ways that a myriad of visitors—ranging from average visitors to academic critics—interpret the four museums in this study.

A few points should be clarified in order to address any additional questions the reader may have. Due to space limitations I have largely omitted temporary exhibitions, learning/family history centers, non-gallery areas (entrance areas and hallways, for example), and online content from my analyses. These exclusions keep the focus on permanent display areas within galleries and exhibitions, allowing for a more thorough and consistent analysis; however, the reader should be aware that the entirety of each museum's narrative is comprised of the gallery areas, non-gallery areas, online content, social media engagement, publications, and events hosted by the institution. Moreover, this thesis focuses almost entirely on the second of a three-fold museological process. Considering this process in three parts—behind-the-scenes curatorial work and funding; museological representations; and visitor reactions and feedback to museums—allows each step to be examined in greater depth. Though this thesis sometimes engages with curatorial processes and visitor reactions, it is the second step—the ways that these histories are presented in museums—that is explored in detail.

THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis consists of one contextualization chapter followed by two core chapters, as well as an introduction and conclusion. The first chapter is entitled 'Museum Backgrounds' and lays a foundation for subsequent analytical chapters. 'Museum Backgrounds' begins by providing an overview of black historical preservation and dissemination in America from the 19th century through the African-American museum movement of the 1960s. It then highlights the evolving purposes of black history museums and identifies the stakeholders of these institutions. Next, the chapter provides a brief history of each museum in this study, detailing the stories of conception, development, and opening with an emphasis on location and politics. The chapter will then examine the current state of the African-American museum landscape, tracking new trends and developments, political climates, funding struggles under the current presidential administration, and recent economic impacts of these institutions. The chapter concludes by encouraging readers to consider black history museums within a broad framework of memorialization, highlighting the ways that this method can benefit scholarly understanding of African-American museological representation.

The next two chapters serve as the core analytical chapters of this thesis. The first chapter, 'Representations of Slavery and the Civil War', examines the representations of the slavery era in the four museums in this study. Because this chapter spans several centuries, it is divided into smaller periods in order to clearly examine each one within its own context. The chapter begins with an exploration of West African history, questioning the ways that museums can effectively root slavery narratives, counter historical and modern misconceptions about African cultures, and present West African history in a balanced manner. It then examines representations of the transatlantic slave trade, focusing on elements like the rehumanization of large numbers and the use of localization and

atmospheres in museum displays. Next, the chapter explores the ways that these institutions engage with slavery by considering how displays balance violence and agency, accentuate diverse enslaved experiences, and visually present less tangible elements of enslaved life. The chapter then examines the long sectional crisis and, in doing so, analyzes the ways that museums approach political and ideological complexities. Finally, the chapter concludes with an analysis of Civil War representations, providing insight into the difficulties that arise from these displays and the ways that these historical narratives remain relevant to modern debates.

The third chapter, 'Representations of the Long Civil Rights Era', examines the ways that museums engage with the long civil rights movement, as originally outlined by Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komozi Woodard in *Freedom North*.[140] The chapter begins by tracking the ways that Jim Crow segregation and segregationists are presented in museum displays, as well as comparing the omission of moderate segregationist thought to the earlier omission of proslavery ideology. The next section focuses on the 'classical' phase of the civil rights era, as defined by civil rights leader Bayard Rustin.[141] This portion of the thesis is concerned with disparities between memory and history, and significant attention is paid to the ways that the institutions in this study resolve these disparities. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the post-civil rights era, analyzing the representations of

[140] According to an outline of the Long Movement by Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, this theory centers around four concepts that reframed how academics considered the period: (1) Locality: The modern civil rights and black power movements were series of local struggles rather than a national social movement; (2) Reperiodization: The modern civil rights and black power movements transcend the historical period of 1955 to 1975; (3) Continuity: The civil rights and black power movements were not distinct social movements, but rather a single continuous struggle for black freedom; (4) The South was not distinct: The differences between southern *de jure* and northern *de facto* racial oppression were exaggerated, and racism was nationwide. See: Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, 'The "Long Movement" as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies', *The Journal of African American History* 92.2 (2007), 265-288 (p. 265). For the first introduction of the long movement theory see: Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980* (New York: Palgrave, 2003).

[141] The 'classical' phase of the civil rights era is considered to begin at either the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 or the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955, and concludes with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination in 1968. See: Bayard Rustin, *Down the Line: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), p. 111.

black power and popular culture, as well as tracking the overall representational differences between earlier and more recent black experiences.

As previously detailed, the core chapters in this thesis center on a method of critical comparative analysis. These chapters do not merely record the ways in which these periods are represented; rather, they critically analyze museological displays within a comparative framework that questions the intent and impact of various representational methods. The critical analysis component of these chapters provides insight into methods used by museums, as well as how those methods may be influenced by locations, political climates, or cultural developments. Furthermore, the comparative element of these chapters questions how displays in one institution relate to displays in another. In addition to comparing these institutions, the comparative analysis focus also incorporates historiography, relevant existing literature, and visitor feedback to produce complex analyses of slavery and civil rights representation.

The two core chapters in this thesis are divided into chronological periods that make up the broader ages of slavery and civil rights in order to mirror museum visitor experience and avoid decontextualization; however, despite a chronological structure each section is thematically centered. Arguments, debates, and themes that shape the representation of black history—which have been detailed in this introduction—serve as the focal points of each section, ensuring that the thesis takes an analytical, rather than a narrative, tone. Though some of these debates are not specific to black history museums in the original literature (they are often discussed instead within the frameworks of museums, public history, heritage tourism, or dark tourism more broadly), they have been applied to slavery and civil rights representation in order to innovatively explore topics that have been missing from African-American museum studies.

Moreover, this thesis comparatively analyzes the ways that black history is represented in museums, but it also considers each museum within its own framework. For

example, the NMAAHC has a tremendous amount of space and resources compared to the other museums in this study.[142] Therefore, the arguments within this thesis do not depend on large space or high funding levels; rather, they focus on general characteristics of high-quality and effective museum displays—regardless of the amount of space or funding was involved with that display development.[143] With this awareness in mind, this thesis argues that there are shared characteristics of effective and powerful African-American history museum displays, regardless of resource availability.[144] These characteristics include black history museums that:

- Prioritize authenticity over accuracy
- Balance education and entertainment
- Embrace nuance and complexity; reject oversimplification and homogenization
- Are aware of current cultural-political climates and attitudes without succumbing to the pressures that they can produce
- Bring visitors' attention to temporal connections between historical periods and between the past and present

[142] The annual budgets for each American museum in this thesis (information for the ISM is not publically available) are as follows: DuSable—about $4 million (as of 2018); BCRI—$2.1 million (as of 2015); NMAAHC—$41.3 million (as of 2017). The total area (total building space, not total exhibiting space) for each museum in this thesis are as follows: DuSable—60,000 square feet; BCRI—58,000 square feet; NMAAHC—nearly 400,000 square feet. See: 'Chance the Rapper, Ken Bennett resign from DuSable Museum board', *Chicago Sun-Times* (26 May 2018) <https://chicago.suntimes.com/news/seven-resign-dusable-board-chance-the-rapper/> [accessed on 6 November 2018]; 'National Museum of African American History and Culture', *Smithsonian* (1 May 2017) <https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/factsheets/national-museum-african-american-history-and-culture> [accessed on 6 November 2018]; 'Leadership Profile', *BoardWalk Consulting*. Available online at: <http://www.boardwalkconsulting.com/media/117731/2015-03-13%20-BCRI%20Leadership%20Profile%20-%20FINAL.pdf> [accessed on 6 November 2018]; Johnson, 'DuSable Museum of African American History'; 'The Building', *Birmingham Civil Rights Institute* <https://www.bcri.org/project/dome/> [accessed on 6 November 2018].

[143] This is not to deny that more funding, space, and resources allows for higher quality displays, but rather suggests that: (1) These elements are utilized with varying efficacy by museum professionals, and *more* does not necessarily equate to *better*; (2) The characteristics listed in the text may be more easily achieved with more funding, space, or resources, but they do not rely solely on the abundant availability of these elements.

[144] This thesis acknowledges that 'effective' and 'powerful' are subjective measuring tools. Different people—with varying experiences, world views, and motivations for visiting—will find different displays, methods, and narratives to be effective or powerful. With this in mind, this thesis uses the characteristics listed above to measure these two concepts.

- Show spatial awareness by connecting narratives to local histories and commemorative landscapes

When museums demonstrate these characteristics they can produce displays that authentically represent the past, and in doing so they gift their visitors with education, empowerment, and a nuanced understanding of history—invaluable tools for a citizenry living through societal divides of historic proportion.

1

Museum Backgrounds

'Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced.'—James Baldwin

ESTABLISHING BLACK PUBLIC HISTORY

THE PRESERVATION AND DISSEMINATION OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

In his famed novel *1984*, George Orwell writes: 'Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.'[1] This complex dynamic between what is remembered, misremembered, and forgotten is an important component in history museums, where these relationships 'are simultaneously confirmed and contested.'[2] The question of who is included in and excluded from historical narratives, or what scholars refer to as social or collective amnesia, revolves around Orwell's concept of power and authority—both of which are central components in the evolving nature of African-American historical representation.[3] Despite a rich history filled with triumphs, tragedies, and contributions to American society, the traditional American historical narrative has, until recently, omitted black experiences from its story. This whitewashing was visible in museums, popular culture, and school curricula. When African Americans were mentioned in these mediums, they were often portrayed as stereotypes, conveniently positioned in the narrative in order to progress the white American story. Whitewashing can have significant impact on marginalized people; as Hertzman, Anderson, and Rowley write, '[i]dentification with aspects of the past…allows groups to assert their permanency and

[1] George Orwell, *1984* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1949), p. 37.
[2] Owen J. Dwyer, 'Interpreting the Civil Rights Movement: Contradiction, Confirmation, and the Cultural Landscape'. In Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford (eds), *The Civil Rights Movement in American History* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2006), 5-27 (p. 10).
[3] Timothy and Boyd define social/collective amnesia as 'selective memory in relation to certain events and people, or a purposeful course of ignoring history'. See: Dallen J. Timothy and Stephen W. Boyd, 'Heritage Tourism in the 21st Century: Valued Traditions and New Perspectives', *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 1.1 (2006), 1-16 (p. 3). (Note: While this thesis provides shortened versions of citations after their first use, each chapter will begin this process again for the reader's convenience.)

legitimacy via narratives of historical depth.'[4] Thus lacking acknowledgement by wider society, African Americans turned inward for historical affirmation.

Though they were excluded from mainstream historical representation, African-American individuals, institutions, and communities have long valued the history and culture of black America. The African-American endeavor to collectively preserve and disseminate black history can be traced to the early 19th century, which marks the beginning of the first era of black public history.[5] During this period, northern intellectuals in cities like New York, Boston, and Washington, D.C. commemorated African-American history in churches, improvement and literary societies, and benevolent associations.[6] Many of these societies were formed with the intention of highlighting historical and literary achievements of African Americans through lectures and forums. Books published during this era, such as James W. C. Pennington's *A Text Book of the Origin and History of the Colored People* (1841) and William Cooper Nell's *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution* (1855), provided a vehicle for publicizing black history, and encouraged further study and documentation within the field.[7]

Though these achievements were significant, access to northern intellectual circles was not widely available to southern African Americans; therefore, for many black Americans, responsibility for preserving history and cultural identity belonged largely to

[4] Emily Hertzman, David Anderson, and Susan Rowley, 'Edutainment Heritage Tourist Attractions: A Portrait of Visitors' Experiences at Storyeum', *Museum Management and Curatorship* 23.2 (2008), 155-175 (p. 158); cites David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 302.
[5] For an overview of the first period of black public history (1882-1909), see for example: Kevern Verney, *The Debate on Black Civil Rights in America* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 9-37; John Hope Franklin, 'On the Evolution of Scholarship in Afro-American History'. In Darlene Clark Hine (ed.), *The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present, and Future* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1986), 13-22 (pp. 13-14).
[6] Andrea Burns, *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), p. 7; cites Jeffrey C. Stewart and Fath Davis Ruffins, 'A Faithful Witness: Afro-American History in Historical Perspective, 1828-1984'. In Susan Porter Benson, Steven Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig (eds), *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 307-336 (p. 308).
[7] James W. C. Pennington, *A Text Book of the Origin and History of the Colored People* (Hartford: L. Skinner Printer, 1841); William Cooper Nell, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution* (Boston: Robert F. Wallcut, 1855).

griots.[8] Key members of West African and enslaved African-American communities, griots served as repositories for local culture, arts, and history. Griots were storytellers, musicians, and historians, relying on oral traditions to disseminate their messages. In America, griots blended the heritage of African Americans with that of their African forebears, ensuring that the two histories merged to create one continuous narrative. Discussing the unique and powerful approach of griots, former museum director John E. Fleming writes:

> *This communal view of history transcended our bondage in America by reaching back to embrace the values and cultural mores rooted in the village culture of the African societies….The sense of history that was passed on by African-American griots incorporated "survival tools", capturing the vision of the American ideal that brought black people out of slavery and through the crucible of intolerance, discrimination, and racism in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century United States.*[9]

Thus, the work of these griots preserved and disseminated black history long before it would be accepted into mainstream American society.[10]

In addition to the intellectual societies of the North and the oral tradition of griots in the South, churches and schools played an important role in preserving and displaying items of historical importance. Artwork produced by local African Americans was an integral element of these exhibitions, though they often also included images and documents related to influential black figures like Phyllis Wheatley and Toussaint

[8] For more on griots, see for example: Thomas A. Hale, *Griots and Griottes: Masters of Words and Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); Thomas A. Hale, 'From the *Griot* of Roots to the Roots of *Griot*: A New Look at the Origins of a Controversial African Term for Bard', *Oral Tradition* 12.2 (1997), 249-278; Regennia N. Williams, 'Of Griots and Grace: The Art of Oral History and the History of African American Religion', *Black History Bulletin* 68.2 (2005), 15-23.

[9] John E. Fleming, 'African-American Museums, History, and the American Ideal', *The Journal of American History* 81.3 (1994), 1020-1026 (pp. 1020-1021).

[10] The fact that griots considered the historical stories they told to be tools of survival demonstrates the way that the preservation and dissemination of black history has always been closely linked to the contemporary cultural-political backdrop. Similar to Carter Woodson's emphasis on 'builders' and role models in the 20th century, these narratives have always been intentionally selected in order to promote certain values, ideals, and ambitions among African Americans.

Louverture.[11] These exhibits increased in number during the latter half of the 19th century, which historian Bettye Collier-Thomas attributes to the 'phenomenal growth of black schools, benevolent institutions, normal schools and colleges and independent political and social organizations' during the period.[12]

Institutions of higher education also played a significant role in the preservation and publicization of black history, culture, and arts.[13] The first museums devoted entirely to African-American history were developed at Howard University and Wilberforce College in 1867 and 1880 respectively.[14] Other historically-black institutions, such as Hampton Institute, Atlanta University, and Fisk University, housed collections of African-American art, artifacts, documents, books, and pamphlets.[15] Representations of African-American history at university libraries, exhibitions, and museums, along with the increased visibility of black history at expositions and world fairs (most notably the 1895 Atlanta Cotton Exposition), helped to further validate the history and culture of black America.[16] However, despite these advances there were still many challenges to overcome before the rest of the country would value African-American history.

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[11] Bettye Collier-Thomas, 'An Historical Overview of Black Museums and Institutions with Museum Functions, 1800-1980', *Negro History Bulletin* 44.3 (1981), 84-86 (p. 84).

[12] Ibid.

[13] For more on the role of these institutions in preserving black history, culture, and arts, see for example: Rodney T. Cohen, *Fisk University* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2001); Rayford W. Logan, *Howard University: The First Hundred Years 1867-1967* (New York: New York University Press, 2004); Veronica Alease Davis, *Hampton University* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2014); Bobby L. Lovett, *America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Narrative History, 1837-2009* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2015).

[14] Howard University was founded shortly after the end of the Civil War in 1867 in Washington, D.C. with funds allocated from the Freedmen's Bureau. Wilberforce University was founded in conjunction with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Wilberforce, Ohio in 1856.

[15] Hampton Institute, now called Hampton University, was founded with the assistance of the American Missionary Association (AMA) in Hampton, Virginia in 1868. The university still houses the Hampton University Museum and is considered to be the oldest black history museum still in existence. Atlanta University, now called Clark Atlanta University after merging with nearby Clark College, was founded with the assistance of the AMA in Atlanta, Georgia in 1865. Fisk University, originally called Fisk Free Colored School, was founded by leaders of the AMA (and in affiliation with the United Church of Christ) to educate freedmen in the months after the Civil War. It opened in 1866 in Nashville, Tennessee.

[16] While African Americans had previously been represented at these fairs and exhibitions, they were portrayed as plantation slaves or as 'barbarous' Africans in contrived displays. In the late 19th century, however, African Americans began to control their representation and organized to create displays exploring black history and culture. This process saw control and power shift from whites to blacks and,

Black public history was considerably advanced during the first few decades of the 20th century. During the 1910s, a new generation of black scholars—most prominently Carter G. Woodson and W.E.B. Du Bois—rose to the challenge of disseminating black history to the public. Du Bois' ground-breaking books like *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) and *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935) inspired readers and challenged misconceptions about black experiences in America.[17] In 1909, Du Bois co-founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and in 1910 he began his job as editor of the organization's monthly magazine, *The Crisis*.[18] Du Bois' commitment to black history was heralded by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. decades later, when he argued that Du Bois 'rescued for all of us a heritage whose loss would have profoundly impoverished us.'[19]

Carter G. Woodson also had a strong impact on black public history. Five years after *The Crisis* began printing, Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) and the *Journal of Negro History*. In 1926 Woodson established the first Negro History Week—a week dedicated to the commemoration of black history and the predecessor to Black History Month.[20] A little over a decade later, he created *The Negro History Bulletin* to encourage teachers and students to embrace black

correspondingly, an evolution toward dignified and accurate displays. See Mabel O. Wilson, *Negro Building* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2012).

[17] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903); W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935).

[18] It was these types of endeavors that ideologically distinguished Du Bois from Booker T. Washington. While Washington believed that African Americans would make long-term gains by focusing on economic advancement, Du Bois felt that African Americans needed to utilize education, information—and, ultimately, the power derived from these elements—to work toward equality. For more on the competing ideas of Washington and Du Bois, see for example: Thomas Aiello, *The Battle for the Souls of Black Folk: W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, and the Debate That Shaped the Course of Civil Rights* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2016).

[19] David W. Blight, 'W.E.B. Du Bois and the Struggle for American Historical Memory'. In Genevieve Fabre and Robert O'Meally (eds), *History and Memory in African-American Culture* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 1994), 45-71 (p. 45). For more on Du Bois, see for example: David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1993); David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois, 1919-1963: The Fight for Equality and the American Century* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 2000); Edward J. Blum, *W. E. B. Du Bois: American Prophet* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

[20] Negro History Week was changed to Black History Month in 1976.

consciousness, black pride, and heroic 'builders' that served as role models for current generations.[21] In addition to these efforts, Woodson's books—most notably *The Mis-Education of the Negro*—promoted the importance of black history education.[22] These milestones in black public history drew attention to the whitewashing of mainstream historical narratives whilst celebrating African-American contributions to American society, paving the way for the growth of black scholarship and museum representation that would come in later decades of the 20th century.

By the 1950s and 1960s, public and scholarly interest in African-American history increased to unprecedented levels. Historians James Oliver Horton and Spencer Crew write that this turning point can be attributed in part to the introduction of black-focused courses and programs within respected universities. They argue that this new university focus 'lent academic legitimacy to the study' of black history and culture.[23] Against the backdrop of civil rights and black power, the increasing interest in black history intricately linked the scholarly pursuit of new research with the cultural pursuit of collecting, preserving, and displaying black history.[24]

Amina J. Dickerson, former president of the DuSable Museum of African American History, credits this new scholarship as playing an integral role in the newfound awareness of black history and, in turn, the representation of that history within museums. She writes: 'Black creative and intellectual expressions combine[d] to promote a Black

[21] James Oliver Horton and Spencer R. Crew, 'Afro-Americans and Museums: Towards a Policy of Inclusion'. In Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig (eds), *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 215-236 (p. 218).
[22] Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1933). For more on Woodson, see for example: Jacqueline Anne Goggin, *Carter G. Woodson: A Life in Black History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993); Pero Gaglo Dagbovie, *The Early Black History Movement, Carter G. Woodson, and Lorenzo Johnston Greene* (Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Burnis R. Morris, *Carter G. Woodson: History, the Black Press, and Public Relations* (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2017).
[23] Horton and Crew, 'Afro-Americans and Museums', p. 219.
[24] For more on the intersection between civil rights and black history education, see for example: Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

aesthetic, while providing an environment in which it is manifest.'[25] Furthermore, due to the recent wave of black scholarship, curators, historians, educators, and audiences could then 'place the events of the past…in a context in which they [could] be critically examined or validated.'[26] Finally, African-American history was becoming validated, respected, and more widely studied.

In addition to the insurgence of black scholarship, the increasing momentum of the civil rights era brought further attention and support to black history and culture, a process that highlighted the societal impact of the increased public visibility of history. Archivist Mary Jo Fairchild points to two primary reasons for the emergence of black museums during the civil rights era. First, the era recognized the significance of cultural awareness as a method for combating racism. She writes that individuals involved in the museum movement saw the early black museums as a way to express 'a new cultural consciousness that arose from the civil rights movement.'[27] Second, African Americans began to consider museums as a way to secure their place in American history and society, discovering that 'the process of conceptualizing, funding, building, and maintaining museums in America dedicated to African American history and culture constitutes a legitimate social movement.'[28] This combination of civil rights activism and growing black consciousness resulted in leaders encouraging 'a uniquely "black" identity…through exhibits and educational programs' and emphasizing 'the vital need for interaction between the museum and the local African American community.'[29] Thus, progress of the civil rights era resulted not only in the continued fight for legal equality, but also in the increased visibility and legitimization of African Americans' place in American history.

[25] Amina J. Dickerson, 'Afro-American Museums: A Future Full of Promise', *Roundtable Reports*, 9.2/3 (1984), 14-18 (p. 15).
[26] Ibid.
[27] Mary Jo Fairchild, 'The African American Museum Movement: New Strategies in the Battle for Equality in the Twentieth Century', *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association* (2008), 5-14 (p. 6).
[28] Ibid.
[29] Burns, *From Storefront to Monument*, p. 5.

Because mainstream American history museums failed to adequately address calls for increased representation of black history in their displays, African Americans across the country established their own institutions.[30] The 1960s saw the opening of museums like the DuSable Museum of African American History in Chicago (1961), the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit (1965), and the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum in Washington, D.C. (1967).[31] These early museums were staffed primarily by leaders within black communities—particularly civil rights activists, artists, and teachers—rather than museum professionals.[32] The museums, often housed in apartment buildings or storefronts, initially focused on community impact; however, as they gained traction, donations from locals and cultural organizations allowed the institutions to present more extensive collections.[33] In addition to the museums' public education and outreach programs, these collections created new spaces within black neighborhoods for learning, understanding, and empowerment.[34]

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[30] Spencer Crew, 'African Americans, History and Museums: Preserving American History in the Public Arena'. In Gaynor Kavanagh (ed.), *Making Histories in Museums* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1996), 80-91.

[31] This trend continued into subsequent decades of the 20th century. Between 1950 and 1980 more than 90 African-American museums were founded in the United States and Canada. Moreover, the 1990s were particularly fruitful years for civil rights preservation. Dwyer writes that '[n]o fewer than a dozen museums and monuments associated with the movement were produced over the course of a decade.' It is worth noting that while this rise in numbers is positive, it can also lead to increased competition for visitors and funding. As van Aalst and Boogaarts write: 'Along with a rise in the number of museums—most of which have comparable collections or programing—comes greater competition among the individual museums, among the museum clusters within the same city, and among the museums and museum clusters in different cities.' This competition can be a contributing factor in museums' shift toward entertainment—as discussed more thoroughly in the introductory chapter. See: Fath David Ruffins and Paul Ruffins, 'Recovering Yesterday: An Overview of the Collection and Preservation of Black History', *Black Issues in Higher Education* 13(25) (1997), 16-22; Dwyer, 'Interpreting the Civil Rights Movement', p. 5; Irina van Aalst and Inez Boogaarts, 'From Museum to Mass Entertainment: The Evolution of the Role of Museums in Cities', *European Urban and Regional Studies* 9.3 (2002), 195-209 (p. 208).

[32] Andrea Burns explains: 'Often these new museums were started in urban areas by community activists who had worked in the civil rights movement and now wanted to use their expertise for a cultural agenda.' See: Burns, *From Storefront to Monument*, p. 3.

[33] Burns, *From Storefront to Monument,* pp. 3-4.

[34] It is interesting to contrast these early black history museums with early museums more broadly. As Duncan Light explains, the first museums in the 19th century 'were designed to be imposing places, frequently resembling cathedrals, in which the visitor felt awe and reverence. Their concern was scholarship and curatorship, not presentation; the display of objects, not the communication of ideas.' While early museums, then, were imposing structures that simply displayed objects for the elite, early black history museums were humble spaces that played an integral role in communities through the expression of ideas and ideals. As George F. Macdonald and Stephen Alsford write, museums will evolve only within their own contexts because 'all museums are products of their particular cultural and historical experiences'. See:

The community-based method used by early African-American museums of the 1960s and 1970s created a strong connection between the institutions and local people. The African American Museum Association later observed that 'a distinguishing trait of Black museums is the intimate relationship which they enjoy with their communities.'[35] In 1972 John Kinard, who was the director of the Anacostia Museum at the time, described the neighborhood museum as an institution that 'encompasses the life of the people of the neighborhood—people who are vitally concerned about who they are, where they came from, what they have accomplished, their values and their most pressing needs.'[36] Furthermore, historian Andrea Burns explains that neighborhood museums 'reject[ed] the traditional image of a museum as an elite cultural institution dedicated solely to collecting and displaying valuable artifacts' in favor of a local, reciprocal approach.[37]

In 1978, staff and members of black-focused museums in America founded the African American Museum Association (later changed to its current name—the Association of African American Museums or the AAAM), a response to the American Alliance of Museums (AAM).[38] The AAAM served—and continues to serve—as a link between African-American museums and assists with lobbying, training, and networking.[39] Former AAAM executive director Joy Ford Austin describes the organization, writing:

Duncan Light, 'Heritage as Informal Education'. In David T. Herbert, *Heritage, Tourism and Society* (London and New York: Mansell, 1995), 117-145 (p. 119); George F. Macdonald and Stephen Alsford, 'Canadian Museums and the Representation of Culture in a Multicultural Museum', *Cultural Dynamics* 7.1 (1995), 15-36 (p. 24).

[35] Dickerson, 'Afro-American Museums', pp. 4-5; cites African American Museums Association, *Profile of Black Museums*, 4.

[36] John R. Kinard and Esther Nighbert, 'The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum', *Museum* 24.2 (1972), 103-109 (p. 103).

[37] Burns, *From Storefront to Monument*, pp. 15-16.

[38] In an interview with Dr. Margaret Burroughs (co-founder of the DuSable Museum of African American History and the AAAM), John E. Fleming asked whether the AAAM was influenced by the AAM and what the relationship had been between the two organizations. Burroughs replied: 'We knew that there was an American Association of Museums and they dealt with the white folks. I think we had even been to a couple of their meetings. But they mainly dealt with what they were interested in. And we saw no conflict between having an African American Museum Association. But I would like to see in the future a sharing of exhibits.' See: John E. Fleming and Margaret T. Burroughs, 'Dr. Margaret T. Burroughs: Artist, Teacher, Administrator, Writer, Political Activist, and Museum Founder', *The Public Historian* 21.1 (1999), 31-55 (p. 50).

[39] Crew, 'African Americans, History and Museums', p. 84; cites Joy F. Austin, 'Their Face to the Rising Sun: Trends in the Development of Black Museums', *Museum News*, January/February (1982), 29-32, 30.

> *[I]t defines a relationship for them within the national museum community; it seeks to strengthen them through improved communication, shared resources, technical aid and assistance, and through fund raising guidance.*[40]

Celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2018, the AAAM continues to support black museums, empowering those who are committed to protecting and preserving African and African-American history.[41]

These early museums educated African Americans about their history, culture, and collective identity, offering affirmation and empowerment in a country that often attempted to delegitimize the black role in American society. In addition to instilling a sense of pride into visitors, African-American neighborhood museums also had the unique museological responsibility of correcting lies, misconceptions, and stereotypes that had been erroneously labelled as 'history' for decades. The roaring energy of the civil rights and black power movements, underpinned by this newly-emboldened collective identity and historical empowerment, manifested itself in community-based museums and created spaces in which community members could gather, support, and heal.[42]

THE SOCIETAL ROLE OF MUSEUMS

Museums are multipurpose institutions. They are mediators, acting as the intermediary between past and present. They also serve as translators, decoding the formal language of academia into a more general language understood by the public. Moreover, museums that deal with sensitive histories of disenfranchised people can help those people form a

[40] Dickerson, 'Afro-American Museums', p. 16.
[41] See: *Association of African American Museums* <https://blackmuseums.org/>.
[42] Ideas associated with black power in particular—such as community uplift, black history education, and racial pride—influenced the principles of early black history museums. See: Burns, *From Storefront to Monument*, pp. 157-159.

collective cultural identity based on pride and understanding. Social geographer Alastair Bonnett argues:

> *[When the past is swept away] you also remove the memories, stories and connections that hold people together, socially as well as individually….Turning complex, diverse places into shallow, simple ones creates a more culturally vulnerable population, an unrooted mass whose only linking thread lies in the ideology that is fed to them from above.*[43]

Museums serve as an important antidote in the societal stripping of cultural value, infusing pride and a sense of worth into communities that have long been marginalized from mainstream societies. For this reason, museums representing histories of marginalized people are not just repositories, archives, and exhibitions; rather, as Dickerson writes, they serve as 'a community gathering space, a community forum, and a cultural refuge.'[44]

In this way, then, black history museums serve a societal, cultural, educational, and political purpose. Historian Charles Forsdick summarizes this purpose in his concept of active pedagogy:

> *[T]here is…a need to acknowledge the ways in which the museum has been enlisted to play an active pedagogical and even political role, asserting the place of slavery and the slave trade in collective memory, disseminating knowledge of them to the general public, and validating the deeper knowledge of the history of slavery that it now provides.*[45]

According to Forsdick, black history museums are not simply pedagogical, but *actively* pedagogical. It is this active form of education that turns didactic energy into cultural-political power. This connection between knowledge, empowerment, and political

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[43] Alastair Bonnett, *Off the Map: Lost Spaces, Invisible Cities, Forgotten Islands, Feral Places, and What They Tell Us About the World* (London: Aurum Press, 2014), p. 27.
[44] Dickerson, 'Afro-American Museums', p. 15.
[45] Charles Forsdick, 'Travel, Slavery, Memory: Thanatourism in the French Atlantic', *Postcolonial Studies* 17.3 (2014), 251-265 (p. 261).

advancement distinguishes black history museums (and those representing similarly marginalized histories) from traditional history museums.[46]

In addition to societal impact, museums can also financially benefit the city in which they are located.[47] Heritage tourism has become increasingly popular as towns commemorate their past to boost local economies. Patricia Davis, an academic specializing in the mechanics of public memory, argues that tourist economics have been responsible for restructuring and revitalizing urban centers that had crumbled in the deindustrialization era. Therefore, she argues that museums are not only intellectually and culturally significant, but that their successes have also been 'symbolic…of the tangible possibilities for museums in broader projects of urban renewal.'[48] In fact, economic stimulation can be used to promote the advancement of museums from conception to development to growth. For example, Frances Smiley, the black heritage coordinator for the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel in the 1990s, said of the BCRI:

> *We feel that the Institute will be a great booster to the economy as well as an image builder for the whole state. People will come to research and get a feel for the movement that changed the course of America and started here in Alabama.*[49]

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[46] In fact, Amina Dickerson has noted that 'the traditional reputation of [the] museum does not communicate what Afro-American museums do.' She references Marta Vega, Director of the Caribbean Cultural Center, who has argued that '"museum" may not be an appropriate term for the lively, community-conscious approach of Black museums.' This debate is evident in the BCRI, in which staff often remind visitors that it is not simply a museum, but rather an institute—a living and evolving space striving to help Birmingham move toward a better future. As one visitor explains: 'Should you call it a museum you will be corrected as it is an ongoing institute.' See: Dickerson, 'Afro-American Museums', p. 15; *TripAdvisor* (11 November 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r326109225-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html> [accessed on 23 November 2018].

[47] It should be noted that there can be negative effects when opening a museum. Severe disruptions, increased traffic, and gentrification can transform these areas into unrecognizable neighborhoods that residents can neither recognize nor afford. For example, in the case of the opening of the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, motel residents were evicted from their rooms prior to renovation. See: Hamil R. Harris, 'A one-woman protest at the Lorraine Motel', *Washington Post* (16 May 2014) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/local/wp/2014/05/16/a-one-woman-protest-at-the-lorraine-motel/?utm_term=.f1a50257f2f0> [accessed on 13 October 2017].

[48] Patricia Davis, 'Memoryscapes in Transition: Black History Museums, New South Narratives, and Urban Regeneration', *Southern Communication Journal*, 78(2) (2013), 107-127 (p. 108).

[49] 'Shrine of the Struggle: Birmingham Civil Rights Institute salutes the Movement', *Ebony* (April 1993), 40-44 (p. 42).

Similarly, Juanita Moore, former director of Memphis' National Civil Rights Museum, said of heritage tourism:

> *I think that for one thing…tourism…has played a major part [in the growth of black history museums]; black tourism and the number of dollars, and this whole international interest in southern history. There is a major interest by international visitors in southern history. The kinds of tourism dollars that come out of that is phenomenal. A major part of southern history is…guess what? Civil rights.*[50]

While some people within these communities may be negatively impacted by the financial stimulation of museum development—as academic Bernard J. Armada writes, 'one's definition of [urban] progress…is a matter of one's racial and economic standpoint'—the opportunities for economic growth have attracted significant interest in historic preservation and commodification.[51]

The financial prospect of a tourist economy has resulted in many politicians and local business leaders joining activists and intellectuals to push for the commemoration of black history—at times even attracting surprising advocates like George Wallace (the infamous Alabama governor who fought for 'segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever'), who argued the economic case for civil rights tourism.[52] If a site

[50] Michael Honey and Juanita Moore, 'Doing Public History at the National Civil Rights Museum: A Conversation with Juanita Moore', *The Public Historian* 17.1 (1995), 70-84 (p. 82). For more on the economic impact of the National Civil Rights Museum on Memphis, see for example: Bernard J. Armada, 'Place Politics: Material Transformation and Community Identity at the National Civil Rights Museum', *Journal of Black Studies* 40.5 (2010), 897-914 (pp. 906-909).

[51] Armada, 'Place Politics', p. 909. For more on the negative consequences of historic preservation, see the discussion of internal dissonance among stakeholders in the following section and in footnote 67 specifically.

[52] While Wallace never explicitly apologized for his earlier positions on segregation, he did distance himself from them in later campaigns, referring to his previous stance as 'wrong but honest'. For more on Wallace's later views on race, see for example: Art Harris, 'George Wallace's Visions', *The Washington Post* (1 September 1982) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1982/09/01/george-wallaces-visions-38/e6ea6741-0338-48f1-ac38-44b20182213d/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.713cb429e925> [accessed on 8 August 2018]; Glenn Eskew, 'From Civil War to Civil Rights: Selling Alabama as Heritage Tourism', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2.3-4 (2001), pp. 201-214; Glenn Eskew, 'The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the New Ideology of Tolerance'. In Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford (eds) *The Civil Rights Movement in American History* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2006), 28-66 (p. 29).

becomes successful, then these investments are likely to pay off with time. As Timothy and Boyd explain:

> *The enormity of the economic impact of heritage tourism cannot be over-stated. As one of the largest forms of tourism, visitors to historic places and the spending that accompanies them in the areas of lodging, food, admission fees and shopping, contribute billions of dollars every year to the global economy and employ millions of people directly and indirectly.*[53]

With so much earning potential—as well as the spread of wealth from the museum to the surrounding town—reluctant advocates of these institutions may be willing to look past the sensitive, politically-charged topic of race.[54]

For these reasons, the development of African-American history museums in the latter half of the 20th century impacted communities, cultures, and economies.[55] In an article discussing the impact of African-American museums, Fairchild refers to the rise of black history museums as 'a new strategy in the battle for equality', indicating the unique responsibilities of these institutions.[56] African-American history museums fulfill the traditional purposes of museums, preserving and disseminating a historical narrative to visitors, but they also counter negative and inaccurate portrayals of black history and culture whilst instilling a sense of pride, affirmation, and identity into African-American visitors. Any analysis of their displays, narratives, or methods, then, is incomplete without a comprehensive understanding of the ways that these institutions impact the world around them, as well as the reciprocal impact that the world has on these institutions.

[53] Timothy and Boyd, 'Heritage Tourism in the 21st Century', p. 4.
[54] Those interested in the economic developments resulting from heritage tourism can also consider the ways that the industry has developed in West African slavery heritage sites. See for example: Edward M. Bruner, 'Tourism in Ghana: The Representation of Slavery and the Return of the Black Diaspora', *American Anthropologist* 98.2 (1996), 290-304.
[55] For more details about the impact of museums on the regions examined in this thesis, see pages 137-139.
[56] Fairchild, 'The African American Museum Movement', p. 5.

MUSEUMS AND THEIR STAKEHOLDERS

In order to understand the complexity of museums, it is important to realize that there is not a singular historical narrative that will satisfy all stakeholders and visitors. As heritage tourism scholars G. J. Ashworth and J. E. Tunbridge first conceptualized, dissonant heritage occurs in historical sites and, as such, interpreting heritage is often complicated.[57] Applying this concept to representations of slavery and civil rights history, we are reminded of the large number of stakeholders in black history museums, many with competing perspectives, experiences, and goals. This process can produce conflicting visions and poses a challenge for museums representing these periods. Within their broader conceptualization of dissonant heritage, Ashworth and Tunbridge discuss 'undesirable transmission', which contributes to scholarly understanding of slavery and civil rights heritage. They explain:

> *This can create dissonance among previous victims, their descendants or those who fear they might be future victims. Equally it can be dissonant to previous perpetrators and their descendants, or to society as a whole, or generations within it, which would rather not be constantly reminded of the depths that can be reached by their shared flawed humanity.*[58]

This concept is particularly applicable to black history eras like slavery and civil rights, in which the modern generation of victims and perpetrators can harbor conflicting views on the representation of the past. For this reason, social geographers Dallen J. Timothy and Stephen W. Boyd explain: '…[T]here is no such thing as a single history. Each view of the past and each way of presenting it will be subjective in nature and will vary between interest groups.'[59]

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[57] For the definition of dissonant heritage see footnote 23 in the introductory chapter of this thesis. Four modes of dissonance are identified by Ashworth and Tunbridge: contradictory transmissions, a failure in transmission, obsolete transmission, and undesirable transmission. See: G. J. Ashworth and J. E. Tunbridge, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (New York: Chinchester, 1996).
[58] Ashworth and Tunbridge, *Dissonant Heritage*, p. 29.
[59] Timothy and Boyd, 'Heritage Tourism in the 21st Century', p. 3.

To identify the stakeholders of heritage sites, tourism scholar A.V. Seaton suggests a 'Force Field' model. Within the Force Field, there are four distinct groups: (1) the subjects of heritage or their representatives; (2) the owners and controllers of heritage; (3) the spatial host communities of heritage development; (4) the audiences. The dynamics between these groups, he argues, change with time as interests, goals, and power shift within societies. Moreover, Seaton writes that relationships between these groups can fall along a spectrum ranging from harmonious to hostile. He explains:

> *The least contentious kind of heritage is one where the allocative/operational controlling group behind the development is itself the sole subject of the narrative, is staging it within its own spatial community, and expects its main visitors to be from the surrounding area…The most contentious heritage is that where the allocative/operational controllers are unilaterally representing subordinated groups, in localities not their own, and framing narratives that do not reflect the subjects' views of themselves…Between these two extremes there is an infinite number of permutations of interaction within the Force Field.*[60]

Seaton, then, identifies an infinite number of shifting power dynamics between stakeholders—a concept that holds true when considered against changing perceptions toward black history museums over time.

This is a particularly useful concept to apply to African-American historical representation in museums. In the case of black neighborhood museums founded in the 1960s and 1970s, African Americans were both the owners/controllers and the subjects; moreover, the institutions were located within black communities and attended by people within those communities. Situated within Seaton's theory, then, this represents the 'least contentious' form of heritage. By contrast, the white-owned/controlled museums located outside of black communities produced narratives that did not truly reflect African-

[60] A.V. Seaton, 'Sources of Slavery—Destinations of Slavery: The Silences and Disclosures of Slavery Heritage in the UK and US', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2.3-4 (2001), 107-219 (pp. 123-125).

American history or culture (either by omission or misrepresentation), which resulted in the 'most contentious' form of heritage.[61]

The location of museums in their development stage can be inherently contentious, demonstrating a geographical dimension to scholarly understanding of museum stakeholders. Seaton uses his Force Field model to explain debates over location in museum development, writing:

> *The model suggests how conflict may not simply arise from discrepancy between subjects and controllers, but also between communities and controllers. The location of a slavery museum might, for example, be perfectly acceptable in some places but resisted elsewhere…In Liverpool the locating of [the ISM's predecessor, the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery] was uncontentious, since the site in the renovated Albert Dock had no surrounding community, and an existing Museum, the Maritime Museum, was already well-established.*[62]

Seaton, writing in 2001, did not yet know how subsequent debates over museum placement of the NMAAHC would develop (which will be further discussed in the next section of this chapter); however, with this retrospective knowledge, it is evident that the theory for the ISM's uncontentious placement in the Maritime Museum did not hold true for the development of the NMAAHC. While the lack of outcry over the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery's placement on Albert Dock was partially attributed to its non-residential location, the fact that the National Mall is a non-residential area did not avert contentiousness. The primary difference between these two developments was the building in which the museum is located—for one, the building already existed (and did so as an established museum); for the other, the building would have to be constructed on a plot of empty land. This

[61] Seaton's 'Force Field' theory is more applicable to black history museums than the more traditional 'domination' model. The latter theory holds that 'the determination of slavery heritage was mainly by powerful business institutions, their commercial agenda and the mainly white audiences they target.' While this may be true for some representations of slavery, if one considers black historical representation within the framework of African-American history museums (and their predecessors, as outlined in previous sections), then this idea does not align with these institutions, which were founded by, operated by, and targeted toward black visitors. See: Graham M. S. Dann and A. V. Seaton, 'Slavery, Contested Heritage and Thanatourism', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2.3-4 (2001), 1-29 (p. 19).
[62] Seaton, 'Sources of Slavery—Destinations of Slavery', p. 125.

difference demonstrates that some of the political contention arising from discussions about museum location lies specifically within the construction phase of the development process. In other words, people may find it more palatable to commemorate black history in an existing building (with minimal external disruption) than through the physical addition of a new institution.

Jacqueline Smith protesting outside of the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee

Moreover, it is important to remember that dissonance often exists within—rather than just between—each of Seaton's four groups of stakeholders. One of the most notable examples of internal dissonance in black history museums can be found at the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. The site is a former motel and the location of the 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Lorraine Civil Rights Museum Foundation purchased the motel in 1982, and in 1988 it would evict its final resident, Jacqueline Smith, to prepare for its 1991 opening. Smith—who had lived at the motel for 11 years at the time of her removal—has publicized her homelessness by camping out across from the museum in protest.[63] Speaking of the

[63] 'Eviction Empties Motel Where Dr. King Died', *The New York Times* (3 March 1988) <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/03/03/us/eviction-empties-motel-where-dr-king-died.html> [accessed on 3 October 2018]; Hamil R. Harris, 'A one-woman protest at the Lorraine Motel', *The Washington Post* (16

museum, Smith said: 'They've converted the motel into a showcase with this Disneyland approach to make a buck. I'd suggest they set aside maybe six rooms to honor Dr. King and make the rest of it a free city college or a senior citizen home.'[64] Her goal, she says, is to promote the preservation of King's legacy not through 'empty space', but rather by using the motel to continue King's work: 'Support for the homeless and disadvantaged, healthcare and help for the old and infirm. These are the issues that mattered to Dr King and they still matter today.'[65] Thirty years later, Smith can still be found across the street from the museum, surrounded by signs with messages such as:

> *BOYCOTT THE CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM*
>
> *Welcome to the $10 million James Earl Ray Exhibition. You are about to desecrate the memory of Dr Martin Luther King*
>
> *DR KING came to the Lorraine Motel to support the disadvantaged—not to preach hatred*
>
> *STOP! Worshipping the Past—START! Living the Dream*

These signs and her omnipresence in this protest space is likely jarring for visitors, who are experiencing dissonant heritage first hand.[66]

May 2014) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/local/wp/2014/05/16/a-one-woman-protest-at-the-lorraine-motel/?utm_term=.b66007f545e3> [accessed on 3 October 2018]. See also: Bernard J. Armada, 'Memorial Agon: An Interpretative Tour of the National Civil Rights Museum', *Southern Journal of Communication* 63.3 (1998), 235-243; John Paul Jones III, 'The Street Politics of Jackie Smith'. In Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (eds), *The Blackwell Companion to the City* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 448-459.

[64] Michael A. Schuman, 'A Shrine to the Dream', *San Francisco Chronicle* (14 January 1996). Smith's sentiment had been echoed by Mohandas Gandhi's grandson amid the National Civil Rights Museum's opening. He stated that King, like Gandhi, 'didn't want people to erect statues and museums in their memory. It's a waste of money.' See: Peter J. Ling, *Martin Luther King, Jr.* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 338.

[65] Harry Low, 'The woman still protesting over Martin Luther King', *BBC* (13 April 2018) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-43562269> [accessed on 3 October 2018].

[66] Though the museum itself is powerful, Smith's core message—that the museum is prioritizing commodification over King's principles and legacy—is reinforced in the museum's gift shop, where (as of my visit in September 2016) items like '306' shot glasses are sold (see photo).

At the time of my morning visit to the museum, Smith was still sleeping under this tarp and had not yet set up for the day.

Some items in the museum's gift shop, like these '306' shot glasses (referencing King's room number), reinforced Smith's message.

The example of Jacqueline Smith and the Lorraine Motel demonstrates the ways that heritage proposals that may seem benign on the surface—like commemorating the site of King's assassination—may produce conflicting visions. Though the story of the National Civil Rights Museum is an extreme manifestation of dissonant heritage, it serves as a reminder of the many stakeholders of historical sites. Moreover, while Seaton's 'Force Field' model identifies four groups of stakeholders and the shifting dynamics between them, it is also important to remember that each of these groups can experience internal dissonance.[67] Understanding black history museums, then, also requires an acknowledgement of their complex purposes—not only as repositories of history, culture,

[67] In his article exploring the opening of Memphis' National Civil Rights Museum, Armada explains this internal dissonance by pointing to differing views within the black community about historic preservation: 'For many African Americans, historic preservation goes hand in hand with the gentrification of the neighborhood, which strips it of the character that once defined it before its designation as "historic."' Thus, as Armada explains, while many African Americans want to preserve historic sites in order to memorialize and celebrate black history and to economically revitalize local communities, others view the process skeptically, concerned about the ways that museum development can negatively impact these areas. This same divide can be detected in debates about the location of Barack Obama's presidential library. While President Obama has received praise for announcing that he will build his presidential library in Chicago's South Side, he has also faced concerns that it may destroy a local park, cause local house prices to soar, or will fail to have economic benefits for the surrounding neighborhood. See: Armada, 'Place Politics', p. 908; Edward McClelland, 'Meet the Community Organizers Fighting Against…Barack Obama', *Politico* (28 February 2018) <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/02/28/barack-obama-library-chicago-217093> [accessed on 15 October 2018].

and knowledge, but also as institutions within communities, and, in the case of Jacqueline Smith, places of residency.[68]

[68] This type of contention between stakeholders of historical sites is similar to that of Elmina Castle in Ghana. In an article examining slavery tourism in Ghana, Edward M. Bruner writes about the castle, in which locals are not allowed without paying an admission fee. He explains that some residents of Elmina—as well as some African-American visitors—have objected to this payment system. Residents who oppose the fee argue that the castle belongs to their neighborhood, while African-American fee opponents believe that they should not have to pay to enter into a site that their ancestors were forced into in the first place. Stories like that of Elmina Castle and the National Civil Rights Museum demonstrate the varied interests of stakeholders in heritage sites. See: Bruner, 'Tourism in Ghana', pp. 297-298.

MUSEUM ORIGINS

ORIGINS, PLACE, AND POLITICS

Before exploring museological representations of African-American history, culture, and experiences, it is important to understand the origins of each institution in this study—the DuSable Museum of African American History (Chicago, Illinois), the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (Birmingham, Alabama), the National Museum of African American History and Culture (Washington, D.C.), and the International Slavery Museum (Liverpool, England). Each museum has a rich, complex history of its own, with openings ranging from 1961 to 2016. These museum origins will be outlined individually in order to provide contextualized, localized information for each institution. Following these individual accounts, common themes that transcend time, place, and institution will be highlighted in a brief comparative analysis.

In addition to each museum's origin story, this section will also address the component of place within the study of African-American history museums.[69] The location of a museum—particularly a museum engaging with sensitive history—can speak volumes about its historical and modern societal impact.[70] The process of location selection for these institutions can be challenging, combining the practical nature of purchasing a building with factors like location significance and community awareness. An effective museum positioned in the right place has the ability to confront painful pasts and transform

[69] Patricia Davis clarifies the transformation from 'space' to 'place', writing: 'Much of the work of constructing collective identities through the built environment involves the production of sites as places. Geographic spaces become *places* once meanings are ascribed upon them, carrying powerful associations and investments for particular communities. Rhetorics of place operate most powerfully when they evoke the history and memory of the site, as public histories provide meaning to place.' See: Davis, 'Memoryscapes in Transition', p. 110.

[70] David Glassberg highlights the important dynamic between history and place, writing that 'historical consciousness and place consciousness are inextricably intertwined. We attach histories to places, and the environmental value we attach to a place comes largely through the memories and historical association we have with it.' This relationship, then, makes the selection of a site a particularly important step in the process of establishing a history museum. See: David Glassberg, 'Public History and the Study of Memory', *The Public Historian* 18.2 (1996), 7-23 (p. 17).

a tragic space into one of commemoration, respect, and remembrance.[71] The cities in this study—Chicago, Birmingham, Washington, D.C., and Liverpool—have witnessed significant events in African-American and black British histories, and residents' efforts to memorialize those histories have resulted in four powerful institutions. Due to the intricate relationship between place, museum narrative, and visitor experience, this dynamic will be explored in this section and throughout the thesis more broadly.

Finally, the role of shifting political climates plays a primary role in these origin stories. Politics is central to heritage creation and representation. As Timothy and Boyd explain: 'Heritage is a complex and highly political phenomenon. There are few social elements and types of tourism that are more hotly contested at so many levels.'[72] It is particularly difficult to divorce current events and political climates from black history museums, as these types of institutions—given both their institutional history and the histories they represent—are inherently political. Because the museums were founded in different time periods, each faced its own set of political challenges—ranging from the McCarthyism that targeted the DuSable's founder to the recent racial tensions serving as a backdrop to the NMAAHC's opening. This section, and the thesis more broadly, will take these political climates into consideration in order to present a contextualized analysis of African-American history museums in their current state.

[71] Davis argues that black history museums are particularly significant in areas with histories of civil unrest centered on race or in places currently plagued by racial conflict. She writes: 'The racial reconciliation advanced through the display of marginalized histories has rendered such museums symbolic both of the abstractions of place and of the tangible possibilities for museums in broader projects of urban renewal.' This sentiment is true of the four museums in this thesis, all of which are situated in cities that have witnessed racial conflict (and continue to do so). See: Davis, 'Memoryscapes in Transition', p. 108.
[72] Timothy and Boyd, 'Heritage Tourism in the 21st Century', p. 2.

DUSABLE MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

The DuSable Museum of African American History in Chicago, Illinois

The creation of the DuSable Museum of African American History can be largely credited to Dr. Margaret Burroughs, an artist, teacher, and activist who was born in Louisiana but moved with her family to Chicago as a young child.[73] Before founding the DuSable Museum, Burroughs had long established herself as a distinguished member of the city's African-American community. In 1941 she helped open the South Side Community Arts Center, a space devoted to displaying work by black artists. In addition to promoting African-American artists, Burroughs was also active in advancing the public appreciation for black history in Chicago. During the 1940s she served as secretary for Chicago's National Negro Museum and Historical Foundation (NNMHF), which promoted African-American history and helped convince Mayor Martin H. Kennelly to celebrate Negro History Week in the city.[74] In 1945, the group tried, but failed, to open an African-American history museum—a disappointing setback but an important learning experience for her future endeavors.[75] During the 1950s, the NNMHF closed and evolved into the

[73] For more on Dr. Margaret Burroughs, see for example: Fleming and Burroughs, 'Dr. Margaret T. Burroughs'; Dr. Margaret T. G. Burroughs, *Life with Margaret: The Official Autobiography* (Chicago: Time Publishing and Media Group, 2003); Ian Rocksborough-Smith, 'Margaret T.G. Burroughs and Black Public History in Cold War Chicago', *Black Scholar* 41.3 (2011), 26-42; Mary Ann Cain, *South Side Venus: The Legacy of Margaret Burroughs* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2018).
[74] Burns, *From Storefront to Monument*, p. 17.
[75] Rocksborough-Smith, 'Margaret T.G. Burroughs and Black Public History in Cold War Chicago', p. 30.

African American Heritage Association, which organized local activities to raise awareness of black history.[76] The setbacks and achievements in her early career helped to shape Burroughs, giving her the skills needed to open one of the nation's first African-American history museums.

In 1960 Margaret, her husband Charles, and other members of the community began to seriously discuss the idea of establishing an African-American history museum in the city. Burroughs recalls:

> *[A group of teachers and myself] noted that the major museums in Chicago were not emphasizing [the positive] aspects of our culture and our history. And we felt that the children needed something to give them pride in themselves….Why can't we have an African-American museum?*[77]

To fill this void, the Burroughses, inspired by Booker T. Washington's encouragement to 'put down your buckets where you are', decided to use her own home to display African-American art and history. She remembers: 'So we looked around the living room where we were, cleared out all the furniture, put up whatever we had to show, [and] put a sign on the door saying Museum of African-American history.'[78] This humble origin marked the beginning of the Ebony Museum of Negro History and Art (changed to the DuSable Museum of African American History in 1968), a pioneering museum established to commemorate a history that had long been overlooked by traditional American institutions.[79]

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[76] Burns, *From Storefront to Monument*, p. 17.

[77] 'The Museum That Saved Chicago's History', *Tony Brown's Journal* (Tony Brown Productions Inc., 2004), see online at: <https://search.alexanderstreet.com/preview/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C2135721?source=relateditems> [accessed on 23 November 2018].

[78] Ibid.

[79] In 2004 Dr. Burroughs was asked about the name change in an interview with Tony Brown. She explained: '[T]he lawyer from *Ebony Magazine* wrote to me and said that we could not call our museum Ebony because…it was their publication. So then I wrote them a letter and said…the word ebony was an adjective…and there was no patent on the use of that word….But the mailman started bringing us their mail because we were both located on Michigan Avenue, and so I'd have to run and put it back in the mailbox…and then people thought that we belonged to *Ebony Magazine* and we didn't need no money. So then it became very clear that we would change it, but we changed it because we wanted to change

Funding proved difficult in the museum's early days, and the Burroughses paid for many expenses from their own pay checks. Of this experience, Burroughs said: 'All of the expenses of the museum such as stationary, telephone bills and stamps were paid out of my teacher's salary and Charles' salary as a laundry truck driver.'[80] Soon, however, the museum's funding was boosted by networks created through activism and other businesses, museums, and libraries.[81] These connections also helped to build the museum's collections, and donations—some from such influential figures as Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps—helped shift the displays from modest collections made up almost exclusively of the Burroughs' own artifacts to eclectic and far-reaching collections that sparked nationwide interest.[82] By 1963 the museum had received over 6,400 visitors and its collections continued to grow in number and in quality.[83] Reflecting on the increase in visitor numbers, Burroughs said: 'Pretty soon, the yellow school buses were lined up in front of [the museum], and people realized that something was going on in there. And it got so crowded that we'd have to go and give the lecture on the bus, run 'em through, run 'em out like that.'[84] The museum, once a dream, was now a reality, and it swiftly began its mission of educating, empowering, and inspiring African Americans.

It is important to accentuate the courage and pride that Burroughs infused into the museum—particularly, Burns writes, at a time when the NAACP and other groups avoided radical rhetoric during the McCarthy period.[85] In fact, the government had already challenged Burroughs because of her 'suspiciously' outspoken nature. Years earlier when

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it….However, [a] few years later, the mayor was always getting letters from people saying we want to have a proper memorial for [Jean Baptiste Point] du Sable…and so I was called to meet with this committee…and I suggested that a proper memorial for du Sable be our museum.' The name change, then, was caused by practical issues but resulted in an opportunity to honor Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, a Haitian trader who founded Chicago in the late 18th century. See: 'The Museum That Saved Chicago's History', *Tony Brown's Journal*.

[80] Burroughs, *Life with Margaret*, p. 102.

[81] Burns, *From Storefront to Monument,* p. 21.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Rocksborough-Smith, 'Margaret T.G. Burroughs and Black Public History in Cold War Chicago', p. 27.

[84] Fleming and Burroughs, 'Dr. Margaret T. Burroughs', p. 41.

[85] Burns, *From Storefront to Monument,* pp. 20-21. See also: Fleming and Burroughs, 'Dr. Margaret T. Burroughs', pp. 37-39.

working as a school teacher, Burroughs had been called before the Board of Education to be interrogated about her left-leaning politics, comments about black history, and her associations with actor, singer, and activist Paul Robeson. Though the experience was rattling, Burroughs remained resilient and was ultimately dismissed from the investigation.[86] During this period, African-American activists like Burroughs often had to endure these types of accusations, and stories such as these make the founding of black institutions during McCarthyism particularly remarkable.[87]

Despite this brush with McCarthyism, Burroughs refused to tone down the museum's message. In a 1965 interview with the Nation of Islam's newspaper *Muhammad Speaks*, she stressed the central theme of black pride in the new museum: 'African history and the true history of black people in America are the most vital studies a Negro can undertake, yet these subjects are almost totally neglected in the education of our youths.'[88] She went on to assert that a lack of pride and knowledge has lowered the morale in African Americans and that 'Negro youths have tended to become the potential school dropouts and juvenile delinquents.'[89] Understanding the crucial problems facing African-American youth, Burroughs considered it her responsibility to educate black children, moving them away from a potential future of crime and toward brighter prospects centering on empowerment and education.[90] Their current mission statement ('To promote

[86] Fleming and Burroughs, 'Dr. Margaret T. Burroughs', pp. 37-39.
[87] For more on the impact of the Cold War and McCarthyism on African Americans, see for example: Gerald Horne, *Black Liberation/Red Scare: Ben Davis and the Communist Party* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994); Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Jeff R. Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948-1968* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2003).
[88] Burns, *From Storefront to Monument,* pp. 20-21; cites 'Black History on Display', *Muhammad Speaks*, May 21, 1965.
[89] Ibid, p. 21; cites 'Black History on Display', *Muhammad Speaks*, May 21, 1965.
[90] Despite this, Burroughs did not consider herself a civil rights activist. Speaking about the separation between the two efforts, she said: '…[W]e had sympathy with [the civil rights movement]…I imagine a lot of Chicagoans participated in it. I spent my time working on black history work and didn't have time to work with them because of what I was working on.' Burroughs' reflections demonstrate that, though the African-American museum movement was partially fueled by civil rights and black power activism, some participants in the museum movement considered their work distinct from that of racial activists. See: Rocksborough-Smith, 'Margaret T.G. Burroughs and Black Public History in Cold War Chicago', p. 32.

understanding and inspire appreciation of the achievements, contributions, and experiences of African Americans through exhibits, programs, and activities that illustrate African and African American history, culture, and art') continues this effort, securing the institution's legacy as a beacon of learning, growth, and empowerment in Chicago.[91]

From its earliest days, location has played an important role in the effectiveness of the DuSable Museum. The original museum in the Burroughs residence was located at 3806 South Michigan, a coach house mansion bought from the Quincy Club—a group of retired black railway workers and Pullman Porters who had owned the house since 1937.[92] The building was located in the heart of Bronzeville, otherwise known as Chicago's South Side, and considered to be the 'cultural heart of black Chicago.'[93] The area, however historically significant, proved to be a challenging location for the Ebony Museum. Policies such as the 1947 Relocation Act were particularly harmful, resulting in the eviction of thousands of African Americans from their homes, which in turn were replaced with public housing complexes.

Burns writes that '[t]hese projects became notorious for their crime and dilapidated conditions, and the inability of residents to relocate from these often dangerous places.'[94] The deterioration—both of the aesthetic and the safety—of Bronzeville had a direct impact on the Ebony Museum. It was clear that the museum was losing the business of potential visitors from outside of the neighborhood who were wary about the area's reputation, and those who did come did so with caution. *Chicago Sun-Times* journalist Lillian Calhoun wrote in 1966 that 'the [DuSable] museum is in the heart of the so-called "Negro ghetto."

[91] 'About the Museum', *DuSable Museum* <http://www.dusablemuseum.org/about-the-museum/> [accessed on 30 January 2017].
[92] One of the Quincy Club members, a Missourian named Ralph Turner, remained involved as a founder and lecturer for the museum when it became a prominent South Side institution during the mid-1960s and 1970s. See: Rocksborough-Smith, 'Margaret T.G. Burroughs and Black Public History in Cold War Chicago', p. 26.
[93] Burns, *From Storefront to Monument,* p. 23; cites Amanda Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 31.
[94] Burns, *From Storefront to Monument*, p. 24.

Mrs. Burroughs notes that many white visitors take pains to come early so they can leave before dark.'[95] Ultimately the museum was moved to its current location in Hyde Park in 1973, near other prominent museums and the University of Chicago.[96] This move signalled the decision of museum leaders to prioritize economic gain and broad visitor appeal at the expense of community location.[97]

Dr. Margaret Burroughs and the DuSable Museum of African American History have left their mark on Chicago and on black historical preservation nationwide. In 2007 historian John Hope Franklin called the DuSable 'one of the pioneer African American museums in the country.'[98] As such, it has inspired others to establish community-focused

[95] Lillian Calhoun, 'Negro Dignity Is Aim of Museum', *Chicago Sun-Times* (13 February 1966).

[96] After its move, 3806 South Michigan was recognized by the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 (listed as '(John W.) Griffiths Mansion) and as a Chicago Landmark in 2010 (listed as the 'Griffiths-Burroughs House'). See: 'Chicago Listings on the National Register of Historic Places as of April 23, 2018', *City of Chicago* <https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/zlup/Historic_Preservation/Publications/National_Register_List_Apr2018.pdf> [accessed on 14 October 2018]; 'Griffiths-Burroughs House', *Chicago Landmarks* <https://webapps.cityofchicago.org/landmarksweb/web/landmarkdetails.htm?lanId=13028> [accessed on 14 October 2018].

[97] The move away from a high-poverty, high-crime area to a safer, more central location parallels the challenges facing some inner-city black history museums today. Many of these institutions began as 'neighborhood museums', and there is a strong historical connection between these museums and their local communities; however, they are also impacted by local crime. This was (and still is, to some extent) an issue for the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, and it has posed a significant problem for museums like St. Louis' Griot Museum, which had its air conditioning unit stolen or tampered with for five consecutive summers. In addition to museums like the Griot Museum being the target of crime, they may also lose potential visitors who do not want to venture into these areas. In the feedback to the museums in this study, some reviewers mentioned that they felt uncomfortable or unsafe outside of the museum that they were visiting: 'I need to share that both entering and exiting the museum I was approached by…men asking for spare cash for food or a nights [sic] fee at the shelter.'; 'There is also a nice park across the street where we would have liked to spend some time in but we were accosted by a young man who wanted to get paid to take our picture with our camera, and/or give us a tour, and/or give him a donation; so beware.' Both reviews were written by BCRI visitors; their accounts reflected my own experience in the area when I was angrily harassed by a man because I could not tell him where the nearest water fountain was located. These types of interactions can be difficult for museums, which rely on outside visitors to contribute to their revenue. See: Honey and Moore, 'Doing Public History at the National Civil Rights Museum', pp. 70-84; Armada, 'Place Politics'; Kim Bell, 'St. Louis black history museum struggles to keep wax figures cool after thieves steal AC units', *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (23 June 2016) <http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/st-louis-black-history-museum-struggles-to-keep-wax-figures/article_77c4350d-adb6-5975-b443-6a939003fd34.html> [accessed on 30 September 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (29 March 2015). <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r262367571-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 14 January 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (14 October 2014) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r234437894-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 14 January 2016].

[98] Burns, *From Storefront to Monument*, p. 15; cites Ray Arsenault and John Hope Franklin, 'The Sage of Freedom: An Interview with John Hope Franklin', *Public Historian* 29.2 (2007), 35-54 (p. 49).

museums in their own cities. Burroughs took the sense of place and community seriously, crediting hard work from ordinary citizens as the recipe for success and a source of pride at the DuSable. In 1980 she told *Black Enterprise* magazine that '[a] lot of black museums have opened up, but we're the only one that grew out of the indigenous black community. We weren't started by anybody downtown; we were started by ordinary folks.'[99] Burroughs' neighborhood approach resonated with aspiring museum founders across the country and helped to establish the community focus that would become a theme in African-American history museums for decades. After her death, President Obama (a former Illinois senator) praised her 'contributions to American culture' and her 'commitment to underserved communities through her children's books, art workshops and community centers that both inspired and educated young people about African-American culture.'[100] Indeed, Burroughs lived an incredibly inspiring life and worked hard to give black history its well-deserved place in the sun.

In recent years, the DuSable has drifted away from its historical position as a strong force in the black museum landscape.[101] Financial issues, wavering visitor numbers, and numerous staff and board departures currently plague the institution.[102] While it is clear

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[99] William Grimes, 'Margaret T. Burroughs, Archivist of Black History, Dies at 95', *The New York Times* (27 November 2010) <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/28/arts/28burroughs.html?_r=0> [accessed on 7 June 2016].

[100] Ibid. Obama served three terms in the Illinois Senate from 1997 to 2004. He then served a single term in the United States Senate representing Illinois in 2004, before winning the presidential election in 2008.

[101] The financial and administrative issues highlighted here correlate with dissatisfaction expressed in some visitor feedback. For example, some reviewers note: 'This museum is a small gem but it could be a bigger one. The space seems under utilized [sic] but also feels that there is not enough care or attention paid to it.'; 'I had high expectations of this museum, and was disappointed. There were not a lot of exhibits or artifacts—for as long as this museum has been around, it seems like they should have more.'; 'The museum is of historical significance…and the main exhibit area is quite well done—but as others have observed it would probably benefit from more exhibits.' See: *TripAdvisor* (21 July 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g35805-d144244-r504259488-DuSable_Museum_of_African_American_History-Chicago_Illinois.html> [accessed on 23 November 2018]; *TripAdvisor* (30 August 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g35805-d144244-r519694763-DuSable_Museum_of_African_American_History-Chicago_Illinois.html> [accessed on 23 November 2018]; *TripAdvisor* (28 September 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g35805-d144244-r528136592-DuSable_Museum_of_African_American_History-Chicago_Illinois.html> [accessed on 23 November 2018]. See also: 'A Fresh Start', *The Economist* (10 September 2015) <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2015/09/10/a-fresh-start> [accessed on 1 November 2018].

[102] For more on the specifics of staff and board departures, see footnote 108 in this chapter. The DuSable received 161,347 visitors in 2011, 102,603 in 2012, 108,874 visitors in 2013, 118,473 visitors in 2014,

that the museum needs to move in a new direction, there have been conflicting visions about how to best do so. This divide was particularly visible in 2015 when artist, professor, and DuSable Museum board of trustees member Theaster Gates proposed a two-year partnership with the University of Chicago.[103] The collaboration would have produced a DuSable Futures Committee that would recruit artists, scholars, and curators for the museum.[104]

There was some concern about the proposal among museum staff, but the controversy largely stemmed from those outside of the museum who felt that the partnership would abdicate power to the (largely white) university.[105] The Concerned Committee for the Support of Independent Black Cultural Institutions, which opposed the proposal, released a statement reading in part:

> *This proposal…will result in a radical reconceptualization of the ideas, cultural focus, historical knowledge, and critical black direction of the DuSable Museum….The defining ideas of Dr. Margaret Burroughs and other co-founders of the DuSable Museum are being disregarded and set aside for "new thought" and a "major conceptual shift."*[106]

100,321 visitors in 2015, 115,364 in 2016, and 111,893 in 2017. All of these numbers stem from Museums in the Park (a group of Chicago museums) figures, but the group's website only includes data from 2013, 2014, and 2015. For the attendance summaries from these three years, see PDFs available at: 'Our Impact', *Museums in the Park* <http://museumsinthepark.org/our-impact/> [accessed on 1 November 2018]. For the attendance data from 2011, 2012, 2016, and 2017, see: Lisa Donovan, 'DuSable Museum's attendance down in 2012', *Chicago Sun-Times* (10 February 2013) <https://www.pressreader.com/usa/chicago-sun-times/20130210/283240210398195> [accessed 1 November 2018]; 'The DuSable bounces back as number of visitors surges', *Chicago Crusader* (3 February 2017) <https://chicagocrusader.com/dusable-bounces-back-number-visitors-surges/> [accessed on 1 November 2018].

[103] The partnerships would have connected the museum to the University of Chicago's Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture and its Arts and Public Life Initiative.

[104] Dawn Rhodes and Dahleen Glanton, 'DuSable Museum proposal from U. of C. professor gets heated response', *Chicago Tribune* (20 July 2015) <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-dusable-museum-met-0721-20150721-story.html> [accessed on 1 November 2018].

[105] Mary Mitchell, a writer for *Chicago Sun-Times*, attributes varying attitudes toward Gates' proposal to a generation gap. She notes: 'The generation that took a fistful of dollars and the sweat of its brow to build black institutions is finding it difficult to hand over the reins to talented visionaries of the next generation.' See: Mary Mitchell, 'Mitchell: DuSable Museum fight exposes generation gap', *Chicago Sun-Times* (18 July 2015) <https://chicago.suntimes.com/columnists/mitchell-dusable-museum-fight-exposes-generation-gap/> [accessed on 1 November 2018].

[106] Ibid.

The proposal was abandoned—though interim DuSable director Bob Blackwell called the opposition an 'overreaction of the local community' stemming from 'hard feelings about gentrification'—but it exposed the dissonance among the staff and members of the community about the museum's future.[107] In the years since this controversy, the museum has seen numerous departures from its staff and board members (including Theaster Gates).[108] Despite these issues, two promising changes—the 2015 naming of new president and CEO Perri Irmer, who says the museum is in '"rebuilding" mode'; and the announcement that the Obama Presidential Center will be built in nearby Jackson Park, as well as interest expressed by both parties of collaborating on future endeavors—provide hope that DuSable can once again exemplify black museum excellence.[109]

[107] 'A Fresh Start', *The Economist*.

[108] The departures have included CFO Veronica Milton and seven board members, including Theaster Gates Jr., Chance the Rapper, Ken Bennett, Eric Whitaker, and Wilbur Milhouse. According to *Chicago Business*, the departures 'stem from mismanagement and from precarious finances, as well as board and staff instability'. The departures also follow a lawsuit involving the museum and former Chief Curator Leslie Guy, who has sued Perri Irmer and the museum for retaliatory discharge after she was fired in June 2018. See: Mitchell Armentrout, 'Chicago artist Theaster Gates latest to resign from DuSable Museum board', *Chicago Sun Times* (1 June 2018) <https://chicago.suntimes.com/news/dusable-theaster-gates-resign-chance-museum/> [accessed on 1 November 2018]; Lisa Bertagnoli, 'Inside the meltdown at a pillar of Chicago's black civic life', *Chicago Business* (1 June 2018) <https://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20180601/NEWS07/180609973/chance-the-rapper-theaster-gates-leave-dusable-museum-board-cfo-exits> [accessed on 1 November 2018].

[109] For more on Perri Irmer's plans to move the museum forward, see for example: Dawn Rhodes, 'DuSable names new president-CEO', *Chicago Tribune* (3 September 2015) <https://www.chicagomag.com/arts-culture/June-2018/Whats-Going-On-at-the-DuSable-Museum/> [accessed on 1 November 2018]; Shia Kapos, 'What's Going On at the DuSable Museum?', *Chicago Magazine* (5 June 2018) <https://www.chicagomag.com/arts-culture/June-2018/Whats-Going-On-at-the-DuSable-Museum/> [accessed on 1 November 2018]. The Obama Presidential Center is scheduled to open in 2021. It is estimated to attract hundreds of thousands of visitors and to generate billions of dollars for the South Side—a promising prospect for the DuSable Museum, which is only a ten-minute car ride away from the construction site. For more on the Obama Presidential Center's development and potential collaboration plans with the DuSable, see for example: *Barack Obama Presidential Library* <https://www.obamalibrary.gov/> [accessed on 1 November 2018]; Lisa Bertagnoli, 'Is the DuSable Museum ready for the Obama Center?', *Chicago Business* (4 May 2018) <https://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20180504/ISSUE01/180509911/dusable-museum-in-chicago-prepares-for-obama-presidential-center> [accessed on 1 November 2018].

BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE

The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute in Birmingham, Alabama

Birmingham, Alabama is a city that is synonymous with racial tension. It was often called the 'Johannesburg of the South' due to the comparable nature of American racism and South African apartheid. In 1960 an article in *The New York Times* reported the racial tension in Birmingham that sparked nationwide interest:

> *Every channel of communication, every medium of mutual interest, every reasoned approach, every inch of middle ground has been fragmented by the emotional dynamite of racism, reinforced by the whip, the razor, the gun, the bomb, the torch, the club, the knife, the mob, the police and many branches of the state's apparatus.*[110]

The city was simultaneously a symbol of white supremacy at its worst and black resistance at its best. In early 1963 Birmingham became a symbol of peaceful activism in what became known as the Birmingham campaign, and the city made national headlines in May with its Children's Crusade, during which hundreds of African-American children peacefully marched downtown, only to be sprayed with firehoses, attacked by police dogs,

[110] Harrison E. Salisbury, 'Fear and Hatred Grip Birmingham: Racial Tension Smoldering After Belated Sitdowns', *The New York Times* (12 April 1960).

and arrested as the nation watched in shock. Later that year the country once again looked to Birmingham in horror after a bomb exploded in the basement bathroom of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, killing four young girls. This was one of the many violent acts that earned the city the nickname 'Bombingham', a nod to a series of bombs planted in African-American neighborhoods and institutions by white supremacists. During the civil rights era, Birmingham served as the backdrop for horror and pain, but also for togetherness and strength. Fifteen years later locals began a new fight—to memorialize the city's battle against white supremacy.

The earliest roots of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute lie in a vision in 1977 from Birmingham Mayor David Vann, a progressive lawyer-turned-politician, who first had the idea to memorialize the city's civil rights legacy after being inspired by the museums devoted to the Holocaust and the Jewish Diaspora in Israel.[111] Though Vann lost his re-election to Richard Arrington, Jr., who would become Birmingham's first African-American mayor, Arrington continued Vann's vision and created a Civil Rights Museum Study Committee in 1981. Though Mayor Arrington was supportive of the museum, historian Glenn Eskew argues that he repeatedly delayed the process. Eskew explains that Arrington's inaction was political—because his most threatening opponent was a white conservative, Arrington feared that his open approval of a civil rights institute could result in his defeat during the next election. However, Eskew writes that even when Arrington won re-election, he remained inactive and others were left to develop the cause independent of local government.[112]

The concept gained traction in 1984 when the Alabama legislature began promoting the idea of a civil rights museum against the broader backdrop of increased

[111] Odessa Woolfolk, 'BCRI History', *Birmingham Civil Rights Institute* <http://www.bcri.org/resources/documents/bcrihistory.pdf> [accessed 20 July 2016].
[112] Eskew, 'The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the New Ideology of Tolerance', pp. 36-37; cites *Birmingham Post-Herald*, 14 February 1984; Jimmie Lewis Franklin, *Back to Birmingham: Richard Arrington, Jr., and His Times* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989), pp. 297-305.

interest in black heritage tourism throughout the state. As noted by Eskew: '[In the 1980s] Alabama became the first state in America to aggressively market its civil rights past and African-American heritage for tourism purposes.'[113] The concept even attracted support from unlikely participants like Alabama's former governor George Wallace—previously a self-proclaimed advocate of white supremacy—who realized the economic advantages of black heritage tourism.[114] Finally, Arrington appointed a task force comprised of teachers, historians, activists, government officials, and business and community leaders in 1986. In its report, the task force emphasized the benefits of an interactive institute rather than a passive museum, and strongly suggested a bottom-up approach within the exhibits. This new mission created the framework for the institute, but funding still needed to be obtained to fulfill the vision.

Amid the early development period of the institute, a dispute about its funding attracted different opinions from residents. Some in the city argued that the public could not support another museum during the Reagan recession, and that the proposed institute would compete for funds with the existing Birmingham Museum of Art.[115] Councilwoman Nina Miglionico explained:

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[113] Eskew, 'From Civil War to Civil Rights', p. 202.

[114] During his fourth term as governor (the racial discourse of which stood in stark contrast to his previous administrations) Wallace wrote the following in *Alabama's Black Heritage*—a fully-illustrated 14-page travel guide that pointed people to nearly 60 black historical sites in the state: 'Throughout our state's history, the cultural, religious, educational, and political views of Alabama's Black citizens have made a strong contribution to our overall way of life. Alabama has much to be proud of in the achievements of the notable Blacks, many of whom have received international acclaim. The Black heritage sites on this tour are a testimony to hard work and constructive change in human attitudes since Blacks first came to Alabama. I encourage Alabamians and visitors from other states to see our Black heritage sites for themselves to recognize the accomplishments of a justly-proud people.' Though Wallace stops short of acknowledging his own participation in encouraging negative 'human attitudes' toward African Americans, his tone had clearly shifted; partly, to be sure, due to the economic potential of black heritage states, but also due to his courting of the black vote. For more notes on Wallace and his evolving views on race, see footnote 52 in this chapter. Glenn T. Eskew, 'From Civil War to Civil Rights: Selling Alabama as Heritage Tourism', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2.3-4 (2001), 201-214 (pp. 206-207).

[115] In addition to competition for resources, there was some concern about the accessibility of materials. In other words, some people believed that opening a black history museum would siphon black history artifacts and documents from other Birmingham institutions. The most notable concern was that of Marvin Whiting, the archivist at Birmingham Public Library and a committee member on the Civil Rights Museum Study Committee. Over time, Whiting had amassed an extensive collection of civil rights materials for the library and, as a result, he thought that the inclusion of an archive in the new BCRI would waste resources

> *As I see the problem, the Birmingham Museum of Art has been the recipient of some $25 million of monies, grants and collectibles, and there is no way that the public in this time of inflation and lowered expectation could meet the needs of another museum of the same quality. I would be opposed to any museum of inferior status or quality.*[116]

In addition to the pushback from citizens, council members, and other local museum professionals, Arrington received formal opposition when two bond proposals requesting funding for the institute failed in 1986 and 1988. Consequently, funding would come first from general revenue bonds that did not require a vote and later from civil leaders and activists.[117]

After overcoming a series of challenges, the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute opened in November 1992. More than two decades later, the institute receives visitors from all over the world. In recent years it has been named 'One of the 15 Places in the Country That Children Should Visit Before They're 15', has been featured in National Geographic's book *100 Places That Can Change Your Child's Life,* and was the first organization to receive the 'I AM MAN' Award from the April 4th Foundation in

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and create competition. Vann responded to Whiting's concerns by arguing that there were many people in the black community who were holding on to their artifacts. These people, Vann said, were reluctant to donate them to the library 'because of perceived racism on the part of the staff'. Vann, then, felt that 'an independent institution seemed the best way to secure these important documents before they fell victim to time.' Responding to this debate, Birmingham Public Library Director George R. Stewart wrote: 'The Birmingham Public Library…has often seen important records and memorabilia vanish while everyone waited for someone to save it. In the twenty years since the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham, much materials, and many memories, have already been lost. Records have been allowed to decay due to poor storage. Individuals have died and the remaining family members have not realized the importance of certain records. Where these records are ultimately housed and serviced is not of immediate importance. Locating, obtaining, and preserving these records is of immediate importance. If the records are not saved now, there will be little need for a Civil Rights Institute later.' While the concern that opening a black history museum may result in less black history in other local museums, Vann's insight demonstrates that the opening of a black history museum can actually result in more resources for black historical representation. See: Eskew, 'The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the New Ideology of Tolerance', p. 34; cites 'Report of Civil Rights Museum Study Committee', October 7, 1981, BCRI Collection; *Over the Mountain Journal*, November 6, 1992; Marvin Y. Whiting to George Stewart, July 25, 1986, BCRI Collection; *Birmingham Post-Herald*, February 14, 1984; George R. Stewart to Edward LaMonte, March 28, 1984, BCRI Collection.

[116] Eskew, 'The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the New Ideology of Tolerance', p. 36.

[117] Odessa Woolfolk, 'BCRI History', *Birmingham Civil Rights Institute* <http://www.bcri.org/resources/documents/bcrihistory.pdf> [accessed 20 July 2016].

Memphis.[118] This institution has transcended the basic purpose of memorialization—it has also provided a community space for understanding, healing, and finding a path forward.[119] As Odessa Woolfolk, who was instrumental in the BCRI's founding, writes:

> *[The institute] is both a time capsule, and a modern day think-tank focused on seeking equitable solutions to common problems. In some ways the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute functions as a town square where the community gathers to discuss common concerns. It is a place where yesterday's struggles inspire a brighter tomorrow.*[120]

Its current mission statement ('To enlighten each generation about civil and human rights by exploring our common past and working together in the present to build a better future') speaks to this sentiment, marking a commitment to understanding our nation's past and working toward equality.[121]

[118] 'Awards and Recognition', *Birmingham Civil Rights Institute* <www.bcri.org/information/AwardsRecognition.html> [accessed on 1 November 2014].
[119] In his recounting of the development of the National Civil Rights Museum (Memphis, Tennessee), Armada writes that the museum 'offered the city an ideal opportunity for historical redemption'—a concept that also applies to Birmingham, which, like Memphis, experienced tragedy in the civil rights era. See: Armada, 'Place Politics', p. 905.
[120] It could be argued that the wording of this mission statement adheres to a linear view of history, in which modern problems are dwarfed by those of the past. See: Odessa Woolfolk, 'BCRI History', *Birmingham Civil Rights Institute* <http://www.bcri.org/resources/documents/bcrihistory.pdf> [accessed on 20 July 2016].
[121] 'About the BCRI', *Birmingham Civil Rights Institute* <http://www.bcri.org./information/aboutbcri.html> [accessed on 30 January 2017].

Police dog statue, Kelly Ingram Park

Water hose statue, Kelly Ingram Park

Patricia Davis writes that '[p]owerful, historically symbolic places may carry more meaning than words, often conveying a sense of home, community/belonging, and, most importantly, identity.'[122] This is particularly true for Birmingham, and the BCRI itself is surrounded by areas of great historical significance.[123] Across the street from the institute is Kelly Ingram Park, a former white-only park that served as the backdrop to Bull Connor

[122] Davis, 'Memoryscapes in Transition', p. 110.

[123] In fact, this area was officially honored for its significance when, as one of his last acts as president, Barack Obama designated the Birmingham Civil Rights District a national monument. The boundary for this protected district includes the BCRI, the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, Kelly Ingram Park, the Gaston Motel, St. Paul United Methodist Church, and portions of the 4th Avenue Historic District. Though many of these buildings were already part of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Register Historic District, they are now also protected by the National Parks Service under the Antiquities Act. The act will ensure that this historically-significant area receives the federal funds and protection that it deserves—an honor that has been well-received by locals. See: Monique Jones, 'President Obama establishes National Monument in Birmingham', *Alabama Newscenter* (13 January 2017) <http://alabamanewscenter.com/2017/01/13/president-obama-establishes-national-monument-birmingham/> [accessed on 3 July 2017]; 'Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument celebrated, sign unveiled during ceremony', *AL.com* (15 April 2017) <http://www.al.com/news/birmingham/index.ssf/2017/04/birmingham_civil_rights_nation_1.html> [accessed on 3 July 2017].

infamously ordering police dogs and fire hoses upon crowds. In 1992 the park was redesigned as 'A Place of Revolution and Reconciliation' and it is an extraordinarily powerful place. A collection of statues within the park reminds visitors of events like the Children's Crusade and the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing, and encourages reflection on past and present race relations.[124] Across the street from the institute and the park is the church itself, a building that exudes pride, though a memorial to the four slain girls serves as a reminder that the church continues to mourn its loss. Standing at this intersection, with the park, the church, and the institute in clear view, visitors can feel the power behind place and space. This special area cultivates an intimate relationship between past, present, and future, encouraging people to consider these three elements as one continuous narrative.

[124] The Children's Crusade was organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in Birmingham in April to May 1963. When the movement needed a boost, thousands of young African Americans volunteered to peacefully protest. The violent reaction of the Birmingham police toward the students was widely publicized and shocked the nation, ultimately resulting in pressure for reform and desegregation in the city. In September 1963 four members of the Ku Klux Klan planted dynamite in the basement bathroom of Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church during a Sunday service. The explosion injured 22 churchgoers and killed four girls, Addie Mae Collins, Carole Robertson, Carol Denise McNair, and Cynthia Wesley.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

The National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

The opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in September 2016 marked an enormous victory for African-American historical representation. The museum's legislative roots lie in 2003, when President George W. Bush signed a law creating the institution. Despite the project's official start, the debate about a nationally-funded African-American history museum in Washington, D.C. began over a century before its opening and persisted fervently throughout the 20th century. The earliest recorded push for African-American historical commemoration in the nation's capital can be traced to 1915, when funds from the Committee of Colored Citizens of the Grand Army of the Republic (formed by black Civil War veterans) were given to the National Memorial Association to create a memorial acknowledging black contributions to America. Though President Coolidge signed a law establishing a commission for this

museum in 1929, the stock market crash and ensuing Great Depression made funding impossible.[125]

During the African-American museum movement of the 1960s, people once again demanded a black history museum in Washington, D.C. Surprisingly, much of the pushback against the concept came from founders of neighborhood museums across the country. In 1965 Dr. Charles Wright, founder of the International Afro-American Museum in Detroit (now called the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History), led the opposition to a white-authored bill that would explore the feasibility of a national black history museum. He later explained in a letter to journalist Carl Rowan: 'We opposed such a bill, because we feel that the Negro, himself, must be a positive, creative force in such a project if it is to create for him the identification that is so vitally needed.'[126] Despite the opposition by Wright and other museum leaders like Margaret Burroughs and John Kinard, the bill gained the support of some black cultural organizations, highlighting the variety of African-American attitudes toward the concept.[127] The bill failed, but momentum was restored in 1968 and the debate resumed. Ultimately, a bill introduced by Congressman Clarence Brown, Jr. passed and it was agreed that a national African-American history museum would be built in Wilberforce, Ohio—the city that served as a hub in the Underground Railroad and home to two of the nation's earliest black universities.[128] After two decades of difficulties, the Wilberforce National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center opened in 1987.

Following the opening of this museum, calls began for the founding of a federally-funded African-American history museum located in Washington, D.C., which sparked

[125] 'Historical Origins', *Smithsonian Archives* <https://siarchives.si.edu/history/national-museum-african-american-history-and-culture> [accessed on 20 September 2017].
[126] Burns, *From Storefront to Monument*, p. 161.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Clarence J. Brown, Jr. was a Republican congressman from Ohio who served from 1939 until his death in 1965. While in office Brown helped advance several civil rights measures, including anti-lynching legislation and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The schools referred to here are Payne Theological Seminary and Wilberforce University, both founded in 1856.

further debate.[129] In the mid-1980s Tourmobile president Tom Mack, disturbed with the lack of black history museums on the National Mall, formed the National Council for Education and Economic Development to develop a proposal for the National African-American Museum. Although Mack was not supported by Congress, the Smithsonian, or the NAACP, he eventually found an ally in Mickey Leland, a Democratic congressman from Texas.[130] In 1986, Leland passed a non-binding and unfunded congressional resolution in support of a black museum on the Mall.[131] During this time, Mack and Leland received considerable pushback from African-American museum founders like Burroughs and Kinard, who worried that a national black museum would divert funds and audiences

[129] Unlike the DuSable, the BCRI, or the ISM—all of which filled a void in black historical representation in their respective cities—the NMAAHC was created to represent a history that was already addressed in the city. Museums that engaged with African-American history in the area, including (but not limited to) the National Museum of American History and the Anacostia Community Museum, were long established. The argument, however, was that the new museum should focus exclusively on black history (unlike at the National Museum of American History) and should be centrally-located (unlike the Anacostia Community Museum). Despite this, there was a risk of spreading funding, artifacts, and visitors too thin with the introduction of the NMAAHC. In a 2016 interview, Lonnie Bunch was asked whether the NMAAHC 'would have a monopoly within the Smithsonian on black stories and black artifacts'. He responded in part: 'Not at all. Because the decision was not to be the black institution in the Smithsonian. There were collections that I didn't keep, I didn't go after collections that were in American History or the American Art Museum. Rather, what I realized is we have an interesting opportunity at the Smithsonian. [In] each of these museums…there are different portals into what it means to be an American. And so for me, it really never was to say, "All things are African American in this building," but rather, "Here are different ways to tell the story."' See: Ally Schweitzer, 'Lonnie Bunch On Telling "The American Story Through An African American Lens"', *WAMU* (16 August 2016) <https://wamu.org/story/16/08/16/interview_lonnie_bunch_african_american_museum/> [accessed on 20 October 2018].

[130] As Fath Davis Ruffins and Paul Ruffins write, the Smithsonian largely ignored black historical representation until the mid- to late-1960s. This omission was criticized by African-American congressmen, who contributed to congressional approval of the institute's budget. Due to this pressure, the Smithsonian established the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum in 1967. The Smithsonian's record on black history resulted in some pushback against efforts to build a national Smithsonian black history museum. Charles Wright, for example, questioned their conservatism and their previous dismissal of black history: 'One of the early architects of this bill was asked "can you assure us that a federally-sponsored museum project would deal fairly with DuBois, Garvey, Robeson and Malcolm X?" Of course not. The Smithsonian Institute…has been more concerned with reptiles and birds than with Black Americans.' As time passed, Smithsonian museums increasingly engaged with black history. Derrick Brooms explains that by the 1970s, black history was more regularly incorporated into most American public and academic institutions, pointing to mainstream American museums like the Brooklyn Museum, the Field Museum of Chicago, the National Portrait Gallery, and the National Museum of History and Technology. Andrea Burns points to a later period, the 1980s and 1990s, as the decades in which white institutions began to represent black history and culture. See: Ruffins and Ruffins, 'Recovering Yesterday'; Burns, *From Storefront to Monument*, pp. 158, 163; Derrick R. Brooms, 'Lest We Forget: Exhibiting (and Remembering) Slavery in African-American Museums', *Journal of African American Studies* 15(4) (2011), 508-523; Horton and Crew, 'Afro-Americans and Museums', p. 219.

[131] Raoul Dennis, 'Who Axed the African American Museum on the Mall?', *New Crisis* 105.1 (1998), 8-13 (p. 9).

from their institutions.[132] After Leland died in a plane crash, other members of the Congressional Black Caucus became interested in the idea. Georgia Congressman John Lewis, a leading civil rights activist, introduced the new bill to the House of Representatives and it passed in 1992.

Despite its passing in the House, conservative North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms succeeded in curtailing the bill in 1993.[133] Helms argued: 'Once Congress gives the go ahead for African-Americans, how can Congress then say no to Hispanics, and the next group, and the group after that?'[134] In 1994 Republicans gained control of Congress and the bill died. *New Crisis* writer Raoul Dennis notes that conservative voices in the Republican Party, combined with problems within Mack's proposal, led to its failure.[135] Congressman Lewis continued to re-propose the bill throughout the 1990s, saying:

> *I will continue to try to make this a reality. We had strong bipartisan support earlier this decade. But to be candid with you, some people will have to no longer*

[132] Dennis, 'Who Axed the African American Museum on the Mall?', p. 10. Lonnie Bunch was recently asked whether the growth of the NMAAHC would make it more difficult for smaller black history museums to continue operating. He responded: 'In fact, I would argue that it's the exact opposite. What this museum has done is help to propel a national conversation around race, around history, and around preserving America's cultural patrimony. What I think is happening is that museums, whether they be in Philadelphia or Chicago or Detroit, are reaping the benefit. All the museum directors who call me talk about how they can now grapple with bigger issues and that there's great interest in their communities around the subject because of the excitement that's come from the national museum. The other thing that has really made this work is that we at the Smithsonian realize that there is no way that we could tell these stories or do this work without recognizing that we are standing on the shoulders of all these other African American museums.' See: Kriston Capps, 'Don't Call it the Blacksonian: Lonnie Bunch on America's Best New Museum', *City Lab* (30 December 2016) <https://www.citylab.com/design/2016/12/dont-call-it-the-blacksonian-lonnie-bunch-on-americas-best-new-museum/511934/> [accessed on 19 October 2018].

[133] A decade earlier, Helms was also at the forefront of the opposition to establishing a holiday to honor Martin Luther King, Jr. Peter Ling explains: 'The bill's chief opponent Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina delighted in pointing out to its Senate sponsor Edward Kennedy that Ted's own brothers, Robert and John, had ordered FBI surveillance of King because of his suspicious communist connections. But Helms was in the minority. Most of his Southern senatorial colleagues—even former Dixiecrat presidential nominee, Strom Thurmond—felt that attacking King's reputation courted electoral difficulties in Deep South states with potentially large African American voting blocs. Helms found more solid support in state delegations from Idaho, Iowa, and New Hampshire than from Alabama, Georgia, or Mississippi.' See: Ling, *Martin Luther King, Jr.* (2015), p. 324; cites David L. Chappell, *Waking from the Dream: The Struggle for Civil Rights in the Shadow of Martin Luther King Jr.* (New York: Random House, 2014), pp. 117-119.

[134] Kate Taylor, 'The Thorny Path to a National Black Museum', *The New York Times* (22 January 2011) <www.nytimes.com/2011/01/23/us/23smithsonian.html> [accessed on 24 June 2015].

[135] Dennis, 'Who Axed the African American Museum on the Mall?', p. 12.

be seated in the halls of Congress in order for this to happen, but it needs to happen in an international setting like Washington, D.C.[136]

After years of pushing forward, the hard work of Mack, Leland, Lewis, and the numerous others who fought for the concept paid off in 2003 when President George W. Bush signed legislation creating the museum.[137]

Though the 2003 legislation put the original museum dispute to rest, another debate took its place: the decision concerning the institution's location. In a report by the National Museum of African American History and Culture Plan for Action Presidential Commission, the group recommended that the new museum be built north of the Capitol Reflecting Pool, the site on which black veterans had first gathered in 1915 to advocate for memorialization. Similarly, John Lewis told the House Administration Committee: 'A National African American Museum should be in the front yard of the United States

[136] Ibid, p. 13.

[137] It is interesting to broaden the scope of this debate to include the establishment of similar museums in Washington, D.C. During the 1980s and 1990s, while advocates were struggling to find support for a black history museum, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the National Museum of the American Indian were Congressionally approved. The Holocaust Museum stemmed from the President's Commission on the Holocaust, established by President Jimmy Carter and chaired by Elie Wiesel (Holocaust survivor and author of the famous memoir *Night*). When the committee recommended the building of a national Holocaust memorial museum in 1979, the measure was approved unanimously by the United States Congress the following year. The museum, which was privately-funded and located on federally-donated land, opened in 1993. The National Museum of the American Indian began with controversy. When it was discovered that roughly 12,000-18,000 Native American remains were being held (largely in storage) by the Smithsonian Institute, Congress passed the National Museum of the American Indian Act in 1989. This act established the museum, which ultimately opened in 2004. These stories demonstrate the relative ease of acquiring Congressional approval for comparable museums in the capital city—an issue raised in a 1998 *New Crisis* article by Raoul Dennis, who questioned how Washington, D.C. could simultaneously appear to be ethnically-focused—with museums dedicated to Native American and Jewish histories—yet resist a national black history museum. See: Raoul Dennis, 'Who Axed the African American Museum on the Mall?', *New Crisis* 105(1) (1998), p. 8. For more on the development and opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, see for example: Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, 'Understanding the Holocaust through the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum', *Journal of Architectural Education* 48.4 (1995), 240-249; Leah Angell Sievers, 'Genocide and Relevance: Current Trends in United States Holocaust Museums', *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust* 30.3 (2016), 282-295 (pp. 286-288). For more on the development and opening of the National Museum of the American Indian, see for example: Duane Blue Spruce (ed.), *Spirit of a Native Place: Building the National Museum of the American Indian* (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, in association with the National Geographic Society, 2004); Don Fowler, 'National Museum of the American Indian', *Museum History Journal* 1.2 (2008), 167-180; Jennifer A. Shannon, *Our Lives: Collaboration, Native Voice, and the Making of the National Museum of the American Indian* (Santa Fe: SAR Press, 2014).

Capitol. The National Mall and the space around it is the front door to America. It is a symbol of our democracy.'[138]

The proposal and its support was opposed by major planning bodies who felt that the Mall was already overcrowded.[139] Furthermore, citizen-led group National Coalition to Save Our Mall called for a halt on any new Mall construction, citing Congress' deeming of the Mall as a 'substantially completed work of civic art' in 2003.[140] While chair Judy Feldman said that she understood why advocates of the NMAAHC were pushing for placement on the Mall, she argued that a better solution would have been to extend the Mall to the Potomac River—thus creating more public space—and to build the museum on the Banneker Overlook.[141]

Despite these objections, other locations seemed second-class to advocates of the Mall placement.[142] When the Mall was chosen from the final four location options, supporters were elated. Museum director Lonnie Bunch said that '[i]t is quite fitting that the experience of African-Americans takes its place among the museums and monuments that honor the history and the contributions of all who have labored, sacrificed, and dreamed to make this country great.'[143] Writing about the symbolically central location of the museum, *The New York Times* reported that supporters felt that its placement on the Mall 'acknowledged the centrality of the African-American experience in the country's

[138] Betsy Adeboyejo, 'African American history museum closer to reality', *Crisis* 110.5 (2003), 11-12 (p. 12).
[139] Taylor, 'The Thorny Path to a National Black Museum', *The New York Times*.
[140] Title II—Commemorative Works, Public Law 108-126 (17 November 2003).
[141] For more on this debate, see for example: Ilan Kayatsky, 'Smithsonian chooses site for African-American museum', *Architectural Record* 194.3 (2006), 49 (p. 49); 'Creating a New Unified Vision', *National Mall Coalition* (18 September 2015) <https://www.nationalmallcoalition.org/2015/09/creating-a-new-unified-vision/> [accessed on 7 August 2018]; 'The National Mall: Making Space for the African American History Museum', *National Mall Coalition* (17 November 2016) <https://www.nationalmallcoalition.org/2016/11/the-national-mall-making-space-for-the-african-american-history-museum/> [accessed on 7 August 2018]; 'Site Evaluation Study—Phase 1: Data Gathering Report', *National Museum of African American History and Culture* (30 September 2005).
[142] Taylor, 'The Thorny Path to a National Black Museum', *The New York Times*.
[143] Kayatsky, 'Smithsonian chooses site for African-American museum', p. 49.

development.'[144] The museum now stands on the National Mall with its bold designs and impressive stature, its dark presence standing out from the lighter buildings surrounding it.

Dedication ceremony at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, September 2016

Over 100 years after its original proposal, the National Museum of African American History and Culture opened its doors in September 2016, guided by its 'four pillars' (which were established in lieu of a mission statement) that promised an impactful museum experience.[145] Three days of festivities marked the occasion. Tens of thousands gathered at the dedication ceremony to watch speakers like Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush, Oprah Winfrey, Will Smith, Lonnie Bunch, and John Lewis, and to watch performances by Stevie Wonder, Patty LaBelle, and other entertainers.[146] Despite the practical drawbacks of the day—large crowds, obstructed views, standing for hours on end—the mood in the air was joyous. The crowd was a blend of many races, Americans

[144] Lynette Clemetson, 'A site is chosen for African-American museum', *The New York Times* (31 January 2006) <www.nytimes.com/2006/01/31/world/americas/31iht-blacks.html> [accessed on 24 June 2015].
[145] See Appendix 2 for the NMAAHC pillars in their entirety.
[146] For contemporary coverage of the dedication ceremony, see for example: 'Highlights from our Dedication Ceremony', *National museum of African American History and Culture* <https://nmaahc.si.edu/dedication-highlights> [accessed on 2 October 2018]; Jessica Contrera, 'African American Museum opening: "This place is more than a building. It is a dream come true."', *The Washington Post* (24 September 2016) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2016/09/24/african-american-museum-opening-a-historic-day-on-the-national-mall/?utm_term=.0745be45288d> [accessed on 2 October 2018].

coming together to mark this milestone and to celebrate the black contributions to American history.

In his dedication speech, President Obama spoke about the importance of the museum:

> *This national museum helps to tell a richer and fuller story of who we are. It helps us better understand the lives of, yes, the president, but also the slave. The industrialist, but also the porter. The keeper of the status quo, but also the activist seeking to overthrow that status quo.*[147]

Congressman Lewis, who spent 15 years fighting for the museum before its 2003 approval, said at the ceremony: 'There were some who said it couldn't happen, who said "you can't do it", but we did it. This place is more than a building. It is a dream come true.'[148] The ceremony concluded with President Obama ringing a 130-year-old church bell from the First Baptist Church in Williamsburg, Virginia—a church founded by slaves. Reverend Reginald Davis explained: 'The connection between a congregation founded in 1776, the forging of the First Baptist Church, the first black president opening the first national African-American museum, all of those dots are being connected.'[149] As the bell rang, it signified a victory in honoring African Americans' place within the American story.

[147] Merrit Kennedy, 'National Museum of African American History Opens Its Doors', *National Public Radio* (24 September 2016) <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/09/24/495302034/national-museum-of-african-american-history-opens-its-doors> [accessed 5 October 2016].
[148] Contrera, 'African American Museum opening'.
[149] Tanya Ballard Brown, '100 Years in the Making, Black History and Culture Museum Gets Ready for Reveal', *National Public Radio* (14 September 2016) <http://www.npr.org/2016/09/14/493688656/100-years-in-the-making-black-history-and-culture-museum-ready-for-reveal> [accessed on 5 October 2016].

INTERNATIONAL SLAVERY MUSEUM

The International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, England

During the transatlantic slave trade era, the city of Liverpool played a significant role as one of England's busiest ports. Although initially London and Bristol dominated the triangular trade, in the mid-18th century Liverpool rose to become Europe's biggest slave port. More than 5,000 slave voyages departed from Liverpool's docks between roughly 1700 and 1807, and curator Anthony Tibbles writes that in the two decades leading up to abolition in 1807 Liverpool was responsible for 75% of European slave voyages.[150] In fact, Liverpool was so central to Britain's slave trade involvement that from 1700 to 1807 just as many slave voyages left from Liverpool as they did from London and Bristol combined.[151] In the city, merchants shipped cargos of textiles, guns, alcohol, and tobacco to West Africa where they were traded for humans. These newly-enslaved Africans would then be transported to the Americas, where boats would be reloaded with goods for Britain. It is within this relentless cycle that Liverpool rose to prominence as a key port city.[152]

[150] Anthony Tibbles, 'Ports of the Transatlantic slave trade', *TextPorts Conference* (2000) <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/resources/slave_trade_ports.aspx> [accessed on 12 January 2016].

[151] John G. Beech, 'The Marketing of Slavery Heritage in the United Kingdom', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism* 2.3-4 (2001), 85-106 (p. 89).

[152] For more on Britain's involvement with the slave trade, see for example: James Walvin, *Black Ivory: A History of British Slavery* (London: Fontana, 1996); Anthony Tibbles, *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human*

The city's racial issues transcended the slavery era and continued throughout the 20th century, as black Liverpudlians felt like the city that had gained its wealth by participating in the slave trade now had no respect and no place for its black residents.[153] This tension culminated in the 1981 Toxteth Uprisings. Toxteth, formerly a prominent Liverpool neighborhood, had fallen into disrepair after devastating bombings during the Second World War, and recent economic hardships had a particularly harsh effect on the region. Poverty, unemployment, and mistreatment from the local police created an anger that exploded in 1981. On July 3, following the police pursuit of a black motorcyclist, a scuffle developed between black Liverpudlians and police. This skirmish, the heavy-handed arrest of a crowd member, and the dramatically-increased police presence that followed resulted in the eruption of riots and protests the following day. The riots lasted four days and in that time the protesters burned down 150 buildings—one of the biggest civil disturbances to date in Britain.[154] The Toxteth riots—along with similar disturbances in Brixton, Chapeltown, Handsworth, and Moss Side—highlighted the need for understanding and healing to move the country forward.

In 1994 Liverpool commemorated the transatlantic slave trade with the opening of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery in the basement of the Maritime Museum—an important step in mending the damaged race relations in the city.[155] Although the Maritime Museum had been open since 1987, the city had done little to acknowledge its role in the

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Dignity (Liverpool: National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1994); Nigel Tattersfield, *The Forgotten Trade* (London: Pimlico, 1998); S.I. Martin, *Britain's Slave Trade* (London: Channel Four Books, 1999); Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The history of black people in Britain* (London: Pluto, 1984).

[153] For a full-length study of Liverpool race relations in the 20th century see: John Belchem, *Before the Windrush: Race Relations in 20th-Century Liverpool* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014).

[154] Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), p. 398.

[155] For more on the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery, see for example: Anthony Tibbles, 'Interpreting Transatlantic Slavery: The Role of Museums'. In Anthony Tibbles (ed.), *Against Human Dignity* (Liverpool: National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1994); Stephen Small, 'Contextualizing the Black Presence in British Museums: Representations, Resources and Response'. In Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (ed.), *Cultural Diversity: Developing Museum Audiences in Britain* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), 50-66; Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Phyllis K. Leffler, 'Maritime Museums and Transatlantic Slavery: A Study in British and American Identity', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 4.1 (2006), 55-80; Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

transatlantic trade or the slave trade's role in the city's economic development. In this way, Liverpool needed a slavery museum—as one had also been needed in Chicago and Birmingham—to address a gap in the representation of black history. Businessman and philanthropist Peter Moores suggested that the museum create a display addressing the slave trade. In 1994, he wrote:

> *During forty years of work and travel in Europe and America, it became increasingly clear to me that slavery was a taboo subject, both to white and black people….We can come to terms with our past only by accepting it, and in order to be able to accept it we need knowledge of what actually happened. We need to make sense of our history.*[156]

Moores donated the money to develop the gallery and an advisory committee was formed to create the gallery's vision.[157]

Written during this climate, John G. Beech explains: 'Until very recently, the UK has been in a state that can best be described as "in denial."' During his schooling in the 1950s and 1960s, students were only offered a superficial explanation of the slave trade:

> *No attempt was made to explain how Evil arose on such a scale…scant effort was expended in order to explore the economic impacts of slavery on Britain, and no one tried to understand how some ports became intimately involved with the trade while others, which might have been expected to follow the lead of Liverpool and Bristol, in fact, took no part in the activity.*[158]

The gradual shift toward acknowledgement and reconciliation, Beech argues, stemmed from '[t]he reality of a post-war Britain that became increasingly multicultural', a process that 'has finally started to heighten awareness of the reality of a shameful past with regard

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[156] Anthony Tibbles, 'Against Human Dignity: The Development of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at Merseyside Maritime Museum', *Proceedings, IXth International Congress of Maritime Museums* (1996) <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/resources/against_human_dignity.aspx> [accessed 14 January 2016].

[157] For more information about the lack of slavery education in Britain before the 21st century, see for example: John G. Beech, 'The Marketing of Slavery Heritage in the United Kingdom', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism* 2.3-4 (2001), 85-106; A.V. Seaton, 'Sources of Slavery—Destinations of Slavery', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2.3-4 (2001), 107-219.

[158] Beech, 'The Marketing of Slavery Heritage in the United Kingdom', pp. 87-88.

to the slave trade and Britain's involvement in it.'[159] A.V. Seaton adds that even in the postwar period, '[t]he absence of heritage development was maintained through the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s', and even when the government encouraged the expansion of heritage tourism (in part as a response to the decline of traditional industries), 'slavery did not feature in this blossoming of economic and social history.'[160] When slavery was acknowledged in heritage sites and commemorative efforts, the narrative focused largely on Britain's anti-slavery history—what John Richard Oldfield refers to as the 'culture of abolitionism'—rather than enslaved experiences or the country's role in the slave trade.[161]

Leading up to the gallery's launch, the founding team had to address a series of concerns about the project. As Richard Benjamin, who became head of the museum in 2006, explains: '[T]here was suspicion of an institution that was seen to have a poor record of addressing black issues and black concerns suddenly undertaking a project so central to the history of black people.'[162] Anthony Tibbles, who served as the project leader in the gallery's development, reflected:

> *The Merseyside Maritime Museum had covered the history of the port of Liverpool until 1857 in one of its first galleries opened in 1984. The slave trade was placed in the context of the overall trade of the port and because of this its significance was underplayed. We had also hurried the brief and were unaware of recent research. On reflection our treatment was woefully inadequate and not surprisingly we were criticized for it.*'[163]

As a result, curators and museum leaders continued to work closely with advisors, black community groups, and the people of Liverpool to create a gallery that would most effectively represent the transatlantic slave trade. On the new project, Benjamin admitted

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[159] Ibid, p. 88.
[160] Seaton, 'Sources of Slavery—Destinations of Slavery', p. 109.
[161] Beech, 'The Marketing of Slavery Heritage in the United Kingdom', p. 89; Seaton, 'Sources of Slavery—Destinations of Slavery', p. 109; John Richard Oldfield, 'Repairing Historical Wrongs: Public History and Transatlantic Slavery', *Social & Legal Studies* 21.2 (2012), 243-255 (p. 244).
[162] Richard Benjamin, 'Museums and Sensitive Histories: The International Slavery Museum'. In Ana Lucia Araujo (ed.), *Politics of Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 178-196 (p. 183).
[163] Tibbles, 'Against Human Dignity'.

that although 'the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery had been a leader in the representation of transatlantic slavery', winning back Liverpool's black community would be a challenge when developing the new museum. Despite this initial tension, he later reported that relations had significantly improved since the museum's opening. Benjamin writes: 'Trust is not so much of an issue, and most people would agree that various community organizations and individuals have a voice within the new museum.'[164]

Following the success of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery, National Museums Liverpool (NML) opened the International Slavery Museum on the third floor of the Maritime Museum in 2007. The year marked the bicentenary of Britain's abolition of the slave trade, and events around the nation brought attention to the slave trade, slavery, and abolition. Under the motto 'Reflecting on the past and looking to the future', the bicentenary resulted in nationwide remembrance of slavery through 'commemorations, museum exhibitions, television series, research projects, publications, [and] educational projects'.[165] NML annually commemorates Slavery Remembrance Day, using the day to '[pay] homage to the many lives lost as a result of the transatlantic slave trade', to '[remember] Liverpool's role as the main British slaving port', and to '[celebrate] the survival and development of African and Caribbean cultures.'[166] Therefore, it was decided that Slavery Remembrance Day within the bicentennial year of 2007 was the perfect time to open the International Slavery Museum. On the plans to open the new museum, NML director David Fleming said: 'It is now time to develop the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery. It has done its job, but it is elderly and dated. It is largely about the past and we must move the story on. We must tell a bigger story.'[167] It has since strived to tell this story, and in the decade since its opening the ISM has committed itself to its mission statement,

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[164] Benjamin, 'Museums and Sensitive Histories', p. 183.
[165] Gert Oostindie, 'The International Slavery Museum, Liverpool. Richard Benjamin, Director', *The Public Historian* 32.3 (2010) 146-147 (p. 146).
[166] Benjamin, 'Museums and Sensitive Histories', p. 179.
[167] David Fleming, 'Transatlantic Slave Trade—Exploring the Legacy', *AFRICOM Conference* (2006) <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/resources/africom.aspx> accessed on 15 January 2016].

'increas[ing] the understanding of transatlantic and chattel slavery and their enduring legacies' in a way that has reformed the racial legacy in Liverpool.[168]

The International Slavery Museum is to date the only museum in the world entirely devoted to representing the transatlantic slave trade, but it is also one of the only museums in Britain that engages with slavery. In 2007 a permanent gallery called *London, Sugar and Slavery* opened at the Museum of London Docklands. The museum, located in a building used to store West Indian sugar, explores how the slave trade shaped the city, the British push for abolition, and the trade's legacy.[169] In 2007 Bristol—another former port city—commemorated the slave trade with *Breaking the Chains*, a temporary two-year exhibition opened at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum. The exhibition focused on the history of the slave trade, resistance, and abolitionism, as well as the slave trade's impact on the Western world.[170] Also in 2007, Hull reopened the Wilberforce House after a two-year renovation period. The Wilberforce House celebrates Hull's famous son, noted abolitionist William Wilberforce, and provides a broad history of slavery.[171] Also housed on this site is the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation (WISE), which, like the Centre for the Study of International Slavery (CSIS) in Liverpool, is an interdisciplinary, academic institute used to generate and disseminate research about slavery and the slave trade.[172]

Surprisingly, these are the only major examples of museums or exhibitions commemorating black British history, though Benjamin writes that there have been a

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[168] To read the ISM's mission statement in its entirety, see Appendix 2.
[169] See: 'London, Sugar & Slavery', *Museum of London* <https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/museum-london-docklands/permanent-galleries/london-sugar-slavery>.
[170] See: Mary Evans, 'Breaking the chains', *The Economist* (22 February 2007) <https://www.economist.com/international/2007/02/22/breaking-the-chains> [accessed on 24 October 2018].
[171] See: 'Wilberforce House Museum', *Humber Museums Partnership* <http://humbermuseums.com/museum-hull/wilberforce-house-museum/>.
[172] See: 'Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation', *University of Hull* <https://www.hull.ac.uk/work-with-us/research/institutes/wilberforce-institute/wilberforce-institute.aspx>; 'Centre for the Study of International Slavery', *University of Liverpool* <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/csis/>.

variety of small, community-focused events and exhibits.[173] This highlights the importance of institutions like the International Slavery Museum in educating the public about the nation's role in the slave trade. Fleming has highlighted the danger of Britons not understanding their nation's involvement with slavery: 'We see [slavery's] legacy in modern Africa, in the Caribbean, in the USA, in South America, but we do not know enough to see cause and effect.'[174] Even the location of the museum in Albert Dock, just yards away from where 18th century slave-trading ships were repaired and prepared for journey, reminds visitors about the importance of place for museums dealing with sensitive histories.[175] Patricia Davis explains that historical landscapes can shift with time and effort, writing that: '[L]andscapes are contestable, evoking shifting discourses of space and place as people assign new meanings to them.'[176] This concept has been demonstrated by the International Slavery Museum, which transformed a city that had shamelessly gotten rich through its involvement with the transatlantic slave trade to a space in which people from around the world can come together to learn, grow, and to guide this great city toward racial reconciliation.

COMPARING MUSEUM BACKGROUNDS

Founders of each institution faced challenges with elements like funding, location, and, in some cases, community pushback. Despite the setbacks and frustrations, these visionaries persisted and established four ground-breaking museums, each telling the story of the black freedom struggle in its own way. Though these institutions and their backgrounds are distinctive, there are common themes shared by all of these museums. In addition to the

[173] Benjamin, 'Museums and Sensitive Histories', pp. 180-181.
[174] David Fleming, 'Liverpool: European Capital of…the Transatlantic Slave Trade' (2005) <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/resources/amsterdam_conference.aspx> [accessed on 14 January 2016].
[175] Benjamin, 'Museums and Sensitive Histories', pp. 179-180.
[176] Davis, 'Memoryscapes in Transition', p. 111.

shared element of shifting political climates—a topic examined in the next section of this chapter—these museum background stories can all be connected through the lenses of community and location.

Tracking the role of respective communities in each museum background story reveals the power of local community members, as well as how this dynamic has changed since the founding of early neighborhood museums. As previously explained, the relationship between each museum and its local community is one of the most distinctive characteristics of early black history museums. The role of community involvement in shaping these museums highlights the importance of empowerment, control, and political impacts of these involvements. Art historian Carol Duncan writes about the importance of community control over its museological representation, noting that this dynamic 'means the power to define and rank people, to declare some as having a greater share than others in the community's common heritage—in its very identity.'[177] Similarly, Armada notes that 'museums are political structures through which status is expressed.'[178] In these ways then, community involvement in display production does not only create a positive relationship between the museum and its community, but also provides that community with power over their representation, identity, and status.

As previously highlighted, surrounding communities impacted each of these four museum histories. In the earliest days of the DuSable Museum (known then as the Ebony Museum of Negro History and Art), members of the local black community founded and ran the fledgling institution. In this case, the museum's founding was entirely due to grassroots involvement, and—unlike the other institutions in this study—there was no

[177] Carol Duncan, 'Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship'. In Ivan Karp and Stephen D. Levine (eds), *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1991), 88-103 (p. 102).
[178] Armada, 'Place Politics', p. 910; cites: Gaynor Kavanagh, *History Curatorship* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1990), p. 4; Sharon Macdonald, 'Introduction'. In Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (eds), *Theorizing Museums: Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 1-18 (p. 2).

alternative (governmental) way to open this museum.[179] While the BCRI and ISM were developed with government support, both institutions incorporated community members throughout the development process. Through vehicles like community task forces (BCRI) and public meetings (ISM), each respective community had an active voice in the development of these institutions, creating partnerships that would contribute to the quality and perspective of each institution.[180] The NMAAHC worked with its local community in a different way. In the years leading up to the museum's opening, curators hosted several events that collected community donations (as well as providing information about how to protect historical items and family heirlooms at home) to create displays that focused on experiences of ordinary people.[181] In all of these cases, then, communities played significant roles in the founding and developing of these museums. Moreover, these examples demonstrate that museum professionals did not consider these communities as merely sources of revenue; rather, they actively contributed creatively, emotionally, and intellectually to the building of these institutions.

[179] For more on the community involvement in the development of the DuSable Museum, see for example: 'The Museum That Saved Chicago's History', *Tony Brown's Journal*; Grimes, 'Margaret T. Burroughs, Archivist of Black History, Dies at 95'.

[180] For more on the community involvement in the development of the BCRI and ISM, see for example: Eskew, 'The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the New Ideology of Tolerance'; Anita Debro, 'Birmingham Civil Rights Institute celebrates 25 years of education, dialogue and history', *Alabama Newscenter* (29 November 2017) <https://alabamanewscenter.com/2017/11/29/birmingham-civil-rights-institute-celebrates-35-years-of-education-dialogue-and-history/> [accessed on 20 October 2018]; Richard Benjamin, 'Museums of the People, by the People, for the People', *Museum-iD Magazine* <http://museum-id.com/museums-people-people-people-richard-benjamin/> [accessed on 20 October 2018]; Richard Benjamin, 'Museums and Sensitive Histories: The International Slavery Museum'. In Ana Lucia Araujo (ed.), *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 178-196.

[181] Similarly, the NMAAHC partnered with Storycorps for an initiative that gathered life stories of African American families, using oral history to preserve the experiences of those in the black community. Another initiative, Memory Book, was launched in 2007 as a social network dedicated to collecting memories and histories of visitors. Finally, the African American Legacy Recording Series has worked since 2007 to explore black oral and musical traditions, emphasizing the connection between black history and music through compilations of blues, jazz, gospel, folk, spoken word, and hip hop. For more on these efforts, see for example: 'Save Our African American Treasures', *NMAHHC* <www.nmaahc.si.edu/Programs/Treasures> [accessed 15 November 2014]; 'Community Partners', *Storycorps* < https://storycorps.org/griot-community-partners/> [accessed on 11 June 2018]; 'NMAAHC Memory Book', *NMAAHC* <www.nmaahc.si.edu/Programs/Memorybook> [accessed 15 November 2014]; 'African American Legacy Recording Series', *NMAAHC* <www.nmaahc.si.edu/Programs/LegacySeries> [accessed 15 November 2014].

Location is another significant factor shared by all the museums in this study. As previously discussed, place is an important element of any history museum, but it is particularly relevant for museums that represent sensitive histories. In the origin stories detailed in this section, the relationship between museum and place manifests itself in three ways. First, the placement of the BCRI and ISM represents the transformation of a space. While each of these locations have painful histories—the site of several civil rights efforts and tragedies (most notably, the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing), and a site near the most powerful docks during the transatlantic slave trade—the development of the BCRI and ISM symbolized collective understanding and healing.[182]

The role of location in DuSable's history, on the other hand, demonstrates the challenges facing some black history museums. In its move to a safer but less culturally significant area in the early 1970s, the DuSable struggled between a desire to serve black urban communities and the necessity for the museum to be located in a low-crime area that would protect the institution and attract outside visitors. This challenge—which has plagued museums like the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis and the Griot Museum in St. Louis in more recent years—highlights the dynamic between place, community, and economics that is central to many African-American history museum origins stories.[183] Finally, location has played a central role in the development of the NMAAHC. The importance of a national location has been a primary component within museological conception, and its placement in Washington, D.C.—and, more specifically, on the National Mall—is symbolic of the central role of African Americans in American history. These three examples of the role of location in black history museum development

[182] The ISM is located in the Royal Albert Dock (previously known as Albert Dock before receiving Royal status in 2018), which was not an original slave trade-era port. While located on the Mersey River near the sites of slave trading docks, the Royal Albert Dock was not opened until 1846.
[183] See footnote 97 in this chapter for more on this topic.

demonstrate the ways that this intertwined dynamic has impacted African-American historical commemoration since the museum movement.

While themes like community involvement and location are significant elements of these four museum origins, these stories also interconnect in a different, perhaps less expected, way. As highlighted in the origins of each of these institutions, it is important to acknowledge the shifting dynamics between museums. Of course, there are inter-city dynamics between museums in a singular area—particularly between institutions that represent similar histories.[184] Perhaps more surprising, however, was the resistance to a national museum by leaders of neighborhood museums in other regions of the nation. The leaders of both the DuSable Museum and the Charles H. Wright Museum—as well as many others—vocally opposed the concept of a national, federally-funded museum. As detailed previously, these concerns centered on funding and visitors, as smaller neighborhood museums did not feel that they were large enough to compete with a museum like the NMAAHC. These examples remind scholars of the continuously evolving relationship between museums—a topic that, though under-explored in black museum studies literature, is important to understand when considering the interconnected nature of public history and heritage tourism.

[184] This was demonstrated in the founding of the BCRI, during which other museum leaders in the area opposed a new institution that would further divide museum funding—particularly amid the austere economic policies of the Reagan administration (see pages 99-100).

THE CURRENT STATE OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MUSEUMS

SURVEYING THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSEUM LANDSCAPE

While the American portion of this thesis focuses on the DuSable Museum of African American History, the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture, these are only a few institutions selected from a growing African-American museum landscape. The AAAM currently lists 91 African-American museums in the United States (see Appendix 4).[185] In addition to these institutions, towns across the nation have built innumerable memorials, monuments, libraries, cultural centers, heritage tours, and other forms of public historical representation to commemorate African-American history.[186]

In recent years, there have been developments within the African-American museum landscape that are worth highlighting in order to contextualize the subsequent chapters of this thesis. In addition to the opening of the highly-anticipated NMAAHC in Washington, D.C. in September 2016, the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum opened in December 2017.[187] The Mississippi Civil Rights Museum has been lauded for its unapologetic representation of civil rights, and its partnership with the Museum of Mississippi History may be a harbinger for coming trends in state-level historical

[185] This number was last updated in November 2018. By contrast, the International Slavery Museum is the only museum in Britain that focuses exclusively on black history. Appendix 4 includes more than 91 United States listings because it also includes sites like libraries, archives, and other institutions not referenced in the AAAM's directory. See: 'Museum Directory', *Association of African American Museums* <https://blackmuseums.org/directory/cat/museum/> [accessed on 18 November 2018].

[186] For a state-by-state overview of National African American Historic Landmark Sites, see: 'National African American Historic Landmarks by State', *Black Past* <https://blackmuseums.org/directory/cat/museum/>; For a list of African-American libraries, archives, and museums, see: 'African-American Libraries, Archives, and Museums', *Cyndi's List* <https://www.cyndislist.com/african-american/libraries/>; For a state-by-state overview of African-American history walking/driving tours, see: 'Black Heritage Travel: Self-Guided Tours and Historical Brochures', *African American History & Heritage Site* <http://creativefolk.com/travel/guides.html>; For a list of African-American historical sites that are managed by the National Park Service, see: 'African American History', *National Park Service* <https://www.nps.gov/aahistory/>.

[187] See: *Mississippi Civil Rights Museum* <https://mcrm.mdah.ms.gov/>.

representation.[188] While the institution attracted critical acclaim for its bold displays, it garnered more media attention due to a controversial guest at its opening ceremony.[189]

The skirmish began when Republican Governor Phil Bryant invited President Trump to speak at the museum's opening, causing Congressmen John Lewis (D-GA) and Bennie Thompson (D-MS) to release a statement protesting the president's attendance. In part, they wrote: 'President Trump's attendance and his hurtful policies are an insult to the people portrayed in the civil rights museum.'[190] Others also criticized the scheduled appearance, like NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson who said that Trump's record on 'the protection and enforcement of civil rights have been abysmal and his attendance is an affront to the veterans of the civil rights movement.'[191] Ultimately, President Trump participated in a brief tour and spoke only to a private audience inside before quietly departing. Meanwhile, protesters outside railed against his presence and an 'alternative event' honoring civil rights veterans was held at the city's Smith Robertson Museum less than a mile away.[192] The Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, as well as the NMAAHC before it, has contributed another powerful institution to the black museum landscape; just as importantly, however, the controversy surrounding its opening serves as

[188] For more on the Museum of Mississippi History, the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, and the collaboration between the two institutions, see for example: *Museum of Mississippi History* <http://www.mmh.mdah.ms.gov/>; Holland Cotter, 'The New Mississippi Civil Rights Museum Refuses to Sugarcoat History', *New York Times* (18 December 2017) <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/18/arts/design/jackson-mississippi-civil-rights-museum-medgar-evers.html> [accessed on 3 July 2018].

[189] Liam Stack, 'If Trump goes, John Lewis will skip Mississippi Civil Rights Museum Opening', *New York Times* (7 December 2017) <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/07/us/john-lewis-trump-museum.html?action=click&module=RelatedCoverage&pgtype=Article&region=Footer> [accessed on 3 July 2018]; Sam R. Hall, 'Trump will not speak publicly at Mississippi Civil Rights Museum opening', *USA Today* (8 December 2017) <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2017/12/08/trump-not-speak-publicly-mississippi-civil-rights-museum-opening/933642001/> [accessed on 3 July 2018].

[190] 'Reps. John Lewis and Bennie G. Thompson Joint Statement on Not Attending Opening of Mississippi Civil Rights Museum' (7 December 2017) <https://johnlewis.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/reps-john-lewis-and-bennie-g-thompson-joint-statement-not-attending> [accessed on 3 July 2018].

[191] Stack, 'If Trump goes, John Lewis will skip Mississippi Civil Rights Museum opening'.

[192] Bracey Harris, '"He does not deserve to be in Jackson": Trump's visit to civil rights museum met with protests', *USA Today* (9 December 2017) <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2017/12/09/he-does-not-deserve-jackson-trumps-visit-civil-rights-museum-met-protests/937988001/> [accessed on 3 July 2018].

a reminder about the inextricable link between African-American history museums and political climates.

To effectively evaluate the current black museum landscape, it is also necessary to consider trends in adjacent institutions.[193] While these museums do not exclusively engage with African-American history, the histories represented in these institutions overlap, complement, and sometimes contrast with narratives presented in black history museums. Because of this implicit connection, the relevancy of these institutions should not be underestimated. This is particularly true of museums representing the Civil War—a topic that intertwines historically, culturally, and politically with black history and modern race relations. In addition to the debate over Confederate monuments, there have been two noteworthy developments within the Civil War museum landscape, both of which relate to current perspectives of racial history in America.

Richmond's Museum of the Confederacy, housed in the Confederate White House, had roots in the postbellum period and was originally created to honor the Confederacy. After the civil rights era, however, the museum recalibrated its focus, adopting more objective and professional interpretations of the war.[194] Despite these changes, the museum faced new issues in the 21st century as some still considered it a 'shrine to the Lost Cause'.[195] As a result, museum leaders decided to evolve and broaden the institution's scope and, in a historic move, merged with the American Civil War Center—a museum that opened in 2016 in Richmond's Tredegar Iron Works and offers a more expansive and objective analysis of the war. These two institutions (along with an Appomattox site)

[193] 'Adjacent institutions' is used here to describe non-black history museums that, due to their nature, are in conversation with African-American history museums.
[194] Kevin M. Levin, 'This Museum Isn't Confederate Enough for These Losers', *The Daily Beast* (29 October 2016) <https://www.thedailybeast.com/this-museum-isnt-confederate-enough-for-these-losers> [accessed on 3 July 2018].
[195] Gregory S. Schneider, 'An African American leader brings a provocative take to expanded Civil War museum', *The Washington Post* (15 April 2018) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/an-african-american-leader-brings-a-provocative-take-to-expanded-civil-war-museum/2018/04/15/6a7daba4-3db4-11e8-974f-aacd97698cef_story.html?utm_term=.614c18e56f2c> [accessed on 3 July 2018].

merged as the American Civil War Museum in 2013 under the leadership of Christy Coleman, an African-American woman who had previously worked with Colonial Williamsburg and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History.[196] The post-merger American Civil War Museum has been praised for its commitment to telling three sides of the Civil War narrative (that of the Union, the Confederacy, and African Americans), though it—and Coleman herself—has received backlash from some Confederate advocates.[197] Despite this, the merger appears to be attracting funding and visitors, and a new 28,500 square foot addition is scheduled to open in 2019.[198]

The most vocal opponents to the merger are located 400 miles away in Elm Springs, Tennessee. The Museum of the Confederacy had historically been supported by the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV), but the evolution of the museum from the 1970s onward caused a rift that was heightened in 2007 when museum leaders considered a name and location change. Responding to the name change proposal—which contemplated the negative connotations of the term 'Confederacy'—an SCV member lamented that museum visitors 'don't want another politically correct watered-down museum that does not give hard viewpoints.'[199] Other perceived slights continued to sour the relationship and the break was finalized amid the 2013 merger with the American Civil War Museum; in fact, SCV coordinator Frank Earnest announced that the SCV was willing to 'go to war' to stop the merger.[200] The SCV has since pledged to build its own museum in Elm Springs, which

[196] For more on the American Civil War Museum and the merger, see: *The American Civil War Museum* <https://acwm.org/>; Schneider, 'An African American leader brings a provocative take to expanded Civil War museum'; Gary Robertson, 'Piecing History Together', *Richmond Magazine* (13 October 2014) <http://richmondmagazine.com/news/features/confederacy-and-civil-war-museums/> [accessed on 3 July 2018]; Chandelis R. Duster, 'Meet the Black Woman Reclaiming the Narrative of the Civil War', *NBC News* (12 July 2017) <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/meet-black-woman-reclaiming-narrative-civil-war-n782006> [accessed on 3 July 2018].

[197] Katherine Calos, 'Civil War center, Confederacy museum join forces', *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (17 November 2013) <https://www.richmond.com/news/local/civil-war-center-confederacy-museum-join-forces/article_0295cb9f-fd5a-5177-98e8-0e1f5f46a6c2.html> [accessed on 3 July 2018].

[198] 'New Museum', *American Civil War Museum* <https://acwm.org/new-museum> [accessed on 3 July 2018].

[199] Levin, 'This Museum Isn't Confederate Enough for These Losers', *The Daily Beast*.

[200] Ibid.

will also serve as an SCV administration space.[201] The website that tracks development for the museum reads in part:

> *The truth about the South's struggle to form a new nation is under attack as never before. The National Battlefield Parks have [been] taken over by the "it's all about slavery" provocateurs…The forces of political correctness have gone into high gear. They attempt to ban any and all things Confederate through their ideological fascism.*[202]

It is important to incorporate these types of developments in an analysis of the African-American history museum landscape. Broadening the scope of black history museums—a topic examined in the next section—provides a contextualized, comprehensive understanding of America's racial public history landscape, which in turn helps scholars understand the dynamics between these institutions. Current trends affecting African-American and Civil War museums—the former enjoying increasing popularity from the general public, the latter being split between the moderate many who are happy with objective, professional, and inclusive Civil War narratives, and the radical few who cling to Lost Cause ideology despite historical debunking—reflect contemporary cultural and political shifts in American society. As such, we are reminded that black history museums should not be divorced from political forces, as doing so decontextualizes and manipulates scholarly understanding of history and its public representations.

For these reasons, it is also important to understand the political climate within which African-American history museums are currently operating. As Seaton writes: '[H]eritage is never a stable, finally completed process but a constantly evolving process of accommodation, adjustment and contestation.'[203] Therefore, museum analyses should be

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[201] Danny Lewis, 'A Controversial Museum Tries to Revive the Myth of the Confederacy's "Lost Cause"', *Smithsonian Magazine* (20 October 2016) <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/controversial-museum-tries-revive-myth-confederacys-lost-cause-180960820/> [accessed on 3 July 2018].
[202] See: *The National Confederate Museum at Historic Elm Springs* <http://www.theconfederatemuseum.com/>.
[203] Seaton, 'Sources of Slavery—Destinations of Slavery', p. 126.

contextualized by assessments on changing cultural-political attitudes. Many considered the 2016 opening of the NMAAHC a seminal moment for the representation of black history. Similarly, the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum has contributed a bold new narrative to the black history museum landscape. These museological advancements are likely linked to the growing popularity and increased dissemination of black history, as well as the growing visibility of African Americans in popular culture.[204] Films like *Twelve Years a Slave* (2013), *Selma* (2014), *The Birth of a Nation* (2016), and *Hidden Figures* (2016) have brought black history, cultures, and experiences to the forefront of national discourse. Moreover, the explicit role of race in current events has challenged the idea of a 'post-racial society' and has served as a reminder that society's collective racial education and effort is far from over.[205]

Despite the increased visibility of black history—or perhaps because of it—racial tension has increased in recent years. A Pew Research Center poll conducted in August 2017 reported that 58% of Americans think racism is a 'big problem in our society' and 29% say that it is 'somewhat of a problem'.[206] This viewpoint is largely split along party lines, with 76% of Democrats and 37% of Republicans labelling racism as a 'big problem'. There is also a noticeable racial divide in the results, with 81% of African Americans and 52% of whites considering racism a 'big problem'. These perceptions are corroborated by recent hate crime data, which indicates high levels of racially-motivated hate crimes. The Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino

[204] Ira Berlin, 'American Slavery in History and Memory and the Search for Social Justice', *The Journal of American History* 90.4 (2004), 1251-1268.
[205] For more on the myth of post-racial American society, see for example: H. Roy Kaplan, *The Myth of Post-Racial America: Searching for Equality in the Age of Materialism* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2011); Mark Ledwidge, Kevern Verney, and Inderjeet Parmar (eds), *Barack Obama and the Myth of a Post-Racial America* (London, Routledge, 2013); Catherine R. Squires, *The Post-Racial Mystique: Media & Race in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2014); Michael Tesler, *Post-Racial or Most-Racial?: Race and Politics in the Obama Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).
[206] Samantha Neal, 'Views of racism as a major problem increase sharply, especially among Democrats', *Pew Research Center* <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/29/views-of-racism-as-a-major-problem-increase-sharply-especially-among-democrats/> [accessed on 4 July 2018].

released an extensive report on hate crimes in 2017.[207] The study concludes that reported hate crimes in the country's ten largest cities rose 12.5% in 2017, resulting in the highest increase in over a decade. The breakdown of these figures reveals that the majority of hate crimes were committed toward those from the African-American, Jewish, and LGBTQ communities. This study joins other recent reports—most notably, data released by the FBI—that demonstrate a rise in reported hate crime numbers.[208]

Hate crimes peaked near Election Day 2016 and President Trump's inauguration—a common occurrence during election season, though continuing high numbers have led to groups like the NAACP and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) to attribute these incidents to Trump's inflammatory rhetoric.[209] NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson explicitly links the increase in hate crimes to Trump: 'From campaign to election, this president has spewed the language of division and hate and it has manifested in not only racist policies but in racist acts against people of color and other groups.'[210] CAIR attorney Gadeir Abbas noted similarly: 'There has been nothing like this ever, for the Muslim community to be regularly the punching bag of the president of the United States.'[211] At times, these hate crimes even intersect directly with black history museums; for example, in May 2017 a noose was found near an NMAAHC display on segregation—an act which Lonnie Bunch, called 'a painful reminder of the challenges that African-

[207] 'Hate Crimes Rise in U.S. Cities and Counties in Time of Division & Foreign Interference', *Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino* (May 2018) <https://csbs.csusb.edu/sites/csusb_csbs/files/2018%20Hate%20Final%20Report%205-14.pdf> [accessed on 4 July 2018].
[208] The FBI releases annual data on hate crime, presenting the previous year's data in detail. For the 2017 data, see: '2017 Hate Crime Statistics', *FBI: UCR* <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2017> [accessed on 13 November 2018]; For the 2016 data, see: '2016 Hate Crime Statistics', *FBI: UCR* <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2016> [accessed on 7 August 2018].
[209] Aaron Williams, 'Hate crimes rose the day after Trump was elected, FBI data show', *The Washington Post* (23 March 2018) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2018/03/23/hate-crimes-rose-the-day-after-trump-was-elected-fbi-data-show/?utm_term=.cc6b393a533e> [accessed on 4 July 2018].
[210] NAACP, 'Legacy of Trump's racism: Rise in hate crimes', *Wisconsin Gazette* (29 June 2018) <https://www.wisconsingazette.com/views/legacy-of-trump-s-racism-rise-in-hate-crimes/article_50b6c428-7bd3-11e8-9091-2fc54d1b8d35.html> [accessed on 4 July 2018].
[211] Reuters Staff, 'U.S. anti-Muslim hate crimes rose 15% in 2017: advocacy group', *Reuters* (23 April 2018) <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-islam-hatecrime/u-s-anti-muslim-hate-crimes-rose-15-percent-in-2017-advocacy-group-idUSKBN1HU240> [accessed on 4 July 2018].

Americans continue to face.'[212] On the rise of hate crimes since the election of 2016, Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) Spokesman Ryan Lenz noted: 'We've never had reports like this ever. We are in a moment where hate and extremism have been legitimized in the public sphere.'[213] The rise in reported hate crimes informs us about America's racial climate and, as such, should be monitored by scholars of black history museums as they study these institutions' continuing societal value.[214]

Undoubtedly, President Trump has set a tone in America's current racial politics. During the Obama administration, Trump entered the political arena by conspiratorially demanding Obama's birth certificate, accusing him of being a Kenyan Muslim.[215] In June 2016 he announced his presidential campaign with a speech that vilified Hispanic immigrants.[216] During the tragic Charlottesville clash between white supremacists and their protestors, during which activist Heather Heyer was killed, President Trump infamously argued that there were 'some very fine people on both sides' of the event.[217] Trump and his surrogates then inserted themselves into the broader debate on Confederate monuments, their erroneous comments deleteriously impacting the national conversation.[218] In the midst

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[212] Amy Held, '2nd Noose Found in D.C., This Time At African American History Museum', *National Public Radio* (1 June2017) <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/06/01/531034568/noose-found-at-national-museum-of-african-american-history?t=1530786968512> [accessed on 5 July 2018]; Philip Kennicott, 'What to do with the noose left at the African American Museum? Make it part of the collection.', *The Washington Post* (1 June 2017) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2017/06/01/what-to-do-with-an-ugly-symbol-of-racial-violence-accession-it-into-the-smithsonian/?utm_term=.b6ed0b875d5b> [accessed on 5 July 2018]; Jillian Caddell, 'America needs its history museums more than ever', *Apollo Magazine* (15 June 2017) <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/america-needs-its-history-museums-more-than-ever/> [accessed on 5 July 2018].
[213] Held, '2nd Noose Found in D.C.', *National Public Radio*.
[214] For updated information on hate crimes, see: 'Hatewatch', *Southern Poverty Law Center* <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch>.
[215] Ashley Parker and Steve Eder, 'Inside the Six Weeks Donald Trump Was a Nonstop "Birther"', *New York Times* (2 July 2016) <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/03/us/politics/donald-trump-birther-obama.html> [accessed on 4 July 2018].
[216] Washington Post Staff, 'Full text: Donald Trump announces a presidential bid', *The Washington Post* (16 June 2015) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/06/16/full-text-donald-trump-announces-a-presidential-bid/?utm_term=.c6a1cef91936> [accessed on 4 July 2018].
[217] Rosie Gray, 'Trump Defends White-Nationalist Protestors: "Some Very Fine People on Both Sides"', *The Atlantic* (15 August 2017) <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/trump-defends-white-nationalist-protesters-some-very-fine-people-on-both-sides/537012/> [accessed on 4 July 2018].
[218] Max Greenwood, 'Trump on removing Confederate statues: "They're trying to take away our culture"', *The Hill* (22 August 2017) <http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/347589-trump-on-removing-confederate-statues-theyre-trying-to-take-away-our> [accessed on 4 July 2018]; Philip Bump, 'Historians

of debates over some NFL players choosing to kneel during the National Anthem, Trump spoke derogatorily toward the players and suggested that 'maybe [the protesters] shouldn't be in the country.'[219] Most recently, the president's Justice Department and Department of Education committed to ending affirmative action in university application procedures, calling the process 'unnecessary, outdated, inconsistent with existing law, or otherwise improper.'[220] In addition to his callousness toward African Americans and Latinos, Trump has made numerous offensive comments about Muslims, and his 'Muslim Ban' continues to divide Americans.[221]

These actions set a tone for the racial climate and combine with hate crimes, acts of police violence, and conflicting perceptions of race and racism to create a turbulent backdrop against which African-American history museums operate.[222] The current state of American politics—amid which everything from race to truth are called into question—causes the role of historians to be debated: are those in the historical profession confined to

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respond to John F. Kelly's Civil War remarks: "Strange," "sad," "wrong"', *The Washington Post* (31 October 2017) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2017/10/31/historians-respond-to-john-kellys-civil-war-remarks-strange-sad-wrong/?utm_term=.380e41a0cbc8> [accessed on 4 July 2018].

[219] Abby Phillip and Cindy Boren, 'Players, owners unite as Trump demands NFL "fire or suspend" players or risk fan boycott', *The Washington Post* (24 September 2017) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/09/24/trump-demands-nfl-teams-fire-or-suspend-players-or-risk-fan-boycott/?utm_term=.e7a67dc12a31> [accessed on 4 July 2018]; Adam Edelman, 'Trump says NFL players who kneel during national anthem "maybe shouldn't be in the country"', *NBC News* (24 May 2018) <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/trump-says-nfl-players-who-kneel-during-national-anthem-maybe-n876996> [accessed on 4 July 2018].

[220] Erica L. Green, Matt Apuzzo, and Katie Benner, 'Trump Officials Reverse Obama's Policy on Affirmative Action in Schools', *The New York Times* (3 July 2018) <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/03/us/politics/trump-affirmative-action-race-schools.html> [accessed on 4 July 2018].

[221] Jenna Johnson and Abigail Hauslohner, '"I think Islam hates us": A timeline of Trump's comments about Islam and Muslims', *The Washington Post* (20 May 2017) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/05/20/i-think-islam-hates-us-a-timeline-of-trumps-comments-about-islam-and-muslims/?utm_term=.02de6b2322e8> [accessed on 5 July 2018].

[222] This thesis continuously draws connections between these museums and broader cultural-political moods. As the most recent museum in this study and the institution that has received the most national and international attention, the NMAAHC is particularly connected to the current political backdrop. After detailing President Trump's NFL comments, *Atlantic* writer Adrienne Green explains: 'It's within this fraught political context that the most comprehensive exhibit of black history in America has operated for the better part of a year, almost serendipitously overlapping with the rise of the current administration.' See: Adrienne Green, 'The Museum Grappling With the Future of Black America', *The Atlantic* (30 September 2017) <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/09/smithsonian-nmaahc-anniversary-little-rock-nine/541473/> [accessed on 15 September 2018].

commenting on only the past, or should they play an active role in public political discourse? In recent years, many historians, historical societies, and museums have inserted themselves into these conversations, adopting an advocacy role that has proven important in the battle over the nation's core values. The heartening insertion of museums into the public discourse has manifested itself on several mediums, such as museum displays, social media advocacy, speeches, reports, and press releases. For example, a study conducted by the AAM remarked on the important role of museums in the current state of American society: 'It has never been more important to have solid and grounded facts at our disposal to dispel myths and convince those who doubt the value of museums.'[223]

At times, however, the commentary is far more explicit and pointed. The AAAM has published several press releases directly referencing President Trump and his actions. In a 'Post-Election Letter', the organization wrote, in part:

> *The recent election has left many of us with a sadly familiar feeling of ambivalence toward the body politic…Presidential elections tend to unlock this sort of introspection as we try to square our individual values, morals, and beliefs with "the choice" of the collective…Amid this uncertainty however, African American museums and cultural institutions must continue their important work unpacking and making sense of the complex and intersecting issues of race, class, nationality, and personhood that framed this combative election…Our museums and cultural centers provide safe spaces for mindful, civil, and vital exploration of our shared past and present. Unsettled moments like this are when our country needs us the most.*[224]

The AAAM took a similarly strong stance when responding to the travel ban enacted by President Trump in January 2017:

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[223] 'Museums and Public Opinion', *American Alliance of Museums* (2018), p. 3. Available online at: <https://www.aam-us.org/2018/01/20/museums-and-public-opinion/> [accessed on 15 September 2018].
[224] 'Post-Election Letter from the President', *Association of African American Museums* (23 January 2017). Available online at: <https://blackmuseums.org/press-releases/> [accessed on 15 September 2018].

> *[T]he Association of African American Museums stands with other museum, library, archive, and history associations who condemn the executive order issued by President Donald J. Trump on January 27, 2017…By restricting the entry of refugees from specific countries, who have undergone significant scrutiny, we fear the direct and indirect impacts this will have on the communities with whom we work and serve…We stand for open-hearted compassion and open-minded opportunity; and, we remember and encourage all U.S. citizens to remember the vibrancy that varied cultures, races, religions, and ethnicities bring to the United States of America.*[225]

A particular point of contention for many American historical organizations was the use of Lost Cause sentiment to defend Confederate monuments. Like the AAAM, many historians and historical organizations adopted a strategy of outreach and advocacy, trying to contribute historical context to the myth-filled public debate. The most powerful aspect of these publications was the reinsertion of race into the debate, countering the 'heritage, not hate' argument.[226] For example, historian Dell Upton writes on the Society of Architectural Historians blog: 'Then as now, these monuments were surrogates for another kind of discussion, one about race and citizenship in the post-slavery nation.'[227] These groups also criticized the erasure argument, challenging the idea that removing or recontextualizing these monuments was akin to erasing history. The statement from the American Historical Association, for example, noted: 'To remove such monuments is neither to "change" history nor "erase" it. What changes with such removals is what

[225] 'AAAM Responds to President's Executive Order Restricting Entry into US', *Association of African American Museums* (7 February 2017). Available online at: <https://blackmuseums.org/press-releases/> [accessed on 15 September 2018].

[226] The 'heritage, not hate' argument is a dominant line of reasoning among those who believe that Confederate monuments should remain as and where they are. The argument refers to the belief that the monuments represent Southern heritage and culture rather than racism, and that removing these items signals appeasement resulting from identity politics-related pressure. Because they consider the monuments in terms of heritage rather than race or historical objectivity, advocates of 'heritage, not hate' believe that the removal of Confederate monuments equates to an attack on Southern heritage.

[227] Dell Upton, 'Confederate Monuments and Civic Values in the Wake of Charlottesville', *Society of Architectural Historians* <http://www.sah.org/publications-and-research/sah-blog/sah-blog/2017/09/13/confederate-monuments-and-civic-values-in-the-wake-of-charlottesville> [accessed on 4 July 2018].

American communities decide is worthy of civic honor.'[228] These statements—and many more like them—demonstrate the ways that historians can reject apoliticism within the profession, instead choosing to lend their extensive historical knowledge and communication acumen to current societal debates.

In these ways, the unbreakable connection between history museums and politics is clearly demonstrated, reminding scholars that understanding what is happening *outside* of history museums is essential to understanding what is happening *inside* them. The museums landscape should be considered in tandem with political moods and cultural shifts—the combination of which reveals a complex tapestry of contemporary American society and the various ways that this tapestry manifests itself in public representations of the past. By doing so, curatorial decisions, museological representations, and institution analyses will more authentically reflect the multi-faceted elements facing black history museums today.

It is also important to acknowledge the financial implications of presidential administrations in the funding of American museums. The three American institutions in this study receive varying levels of federal support, and this funding is imperative for museums to continue operating. [229] Because of this dependence, there is a direct link

[228] 'Statement on Confederate Monuments', *American Historical Association* <https://www.historians.org/news-and-advocacy/statements-and-resolutions-of-support-and-protest/aha-statement-on-confederate-monuments> [accessed on 4 July 2018].

[229] Much of the financial information for museums is kept private, though some details are publically available. The funding for each of the institutions in this study include a combination of private and public funds. The 2013 funding information (which is the latest available) for DuSable Museum states that the museum receives 40% of its funding from Chicago Park District, 16% from corporations and foundations, 15% from government grants, and 14% from special events. The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute does not publish most of its information, but it is evident that it receives some funding from the African American Civil Rights Grant Program (a National Park Service initiative). As per the legislation that approved the museum, the NMAAHC receives 50% of its funding through federal appropriation and 50% through non-federal sources. The 2003-2015 budget was $540 million ($270 million federal; $270 million non-federal). The National Museums Liverpool (which funds the International Slavery Museum) supplements funding from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport with self-generated income. NML raised 40% of its total income for 2016/2017 (£13 million), and they raised 31% of their total income in 2017/2018 (£8.9 million). Funds are also raised from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Tanyptera Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, DSMC Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund, and through person donations. NML raised £223,000 from donation boxes last year. See: DuSable's Annual Reports for 2011-2013 can be downloaded from: 'Institutional Giving', *DuSable Museum of African American History*

between federal spending and museum budgets. Museums have been particularly endangered during the Trump administration. Trump's first federal budget planned to eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)—despite the fact that the combined annual budgets for these two endowments is around 0.003% of the total annual discretionary spending in the US.[230] The Congressional budget signed, however, allocated an addition $3 million to each endowment, and an addition $9 million to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (which oversees the Office of Museum Services).[231]

The allocation of additional funds boosted the confidence of some museum advocates, a sentiment that they expressed in the lead-up to the 2019 budget negotiations. On the impact of last year's victory, AAM President and CEO Laura Lott said: 'Museum advocates scored a significant victory in FY 2018 with a three million dollar funding increase for OMS [Office of Museum Services] and are well-positioned to build on their hard-fought momentum.'[232] However, it appears that President Trump has not yet retreated from his previous position. In his 2019 budget proposal (released in February 2018), Trump aimed to reduce funding to the Institute of Museum and Library Services by 90%

<https://www.dusablemuseum.org/institutional-giving/> [accessed on 18 February 2018]; 'National Park Service Announces Over $7.5 Million in Grants to Preserve African American Civil Rights Movement Sites', *NPS* <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/01-12-2017-civil-rights-grants.htm> [accessed on 18 February 2018]; 'H.R.3491-National Museum of African American History and Culture Act', *United States Congress* <https://www.congress.gov/bill/108th-congress/house-bill/3491> [accessed on 18 February 2018]; NML annual reviews can be downloaded from: 'Annual Reviews', *Liverpool Museums* <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/about/corporate/annual-review/index.aspx> [accessed on 6 November 2018].

[230] The NEA and the NEH provide grants for art and history museums, among many other facets of the arts and humanities. See: Roisin O'Connor, 'Donald Trump proposes to scrap arts funding from NEA to federal funds for PBS channel and NPR radio', *Independent* (16 March 2017) <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/donald-trump-scrap-arts-funding-nea-pbs-channel-npr-radio-neh-national-endowment-arts-humanities-a7632566.html> [accessed on 4 July 2018].

[231] Peggy McGlone, 'Trump wanted to cut arts funding. Instead, the spending bill he signed gives it a boost.', *The Washington Post* (23 March 2018) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2018/03/23/cultural-funding-increased-in-congresss-massive-spending-plan/?utm_term=.b24c387493f1> [accessed on 4 July 2018].

[232] 'Speak Up for Museums: Urge Congress to Support the Office of Museum Services', *American Alliance of Museums* (7 June 2018) <https://www.aam-us.org/2018/06/07/speak-up-for-museums-urge-congress-to-support-the-office-of-museum-services/> [accessed on 4 July 2018].

and to ultimately shut down the agency.[233] This, among other similar proposals to arts and humanities funding, signals to American museums that their funding will likely be under threat throughout the duration of a Trump administration.

There is a significant amount of congressional support for museum funding. For example, in April 2018 forty senators signed a letter calling for 'robust funding' for the OMS in the 2019 budget; however, an examination of the letter's signatories reveals the partisan divide on these types of services, as only one Republican (Dan Sullivan, R-AK) signed the document.[234] This type of partisanship was also apparent in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, approved in December 2017, which Republicans approved with the dissent of only 14 of their members.[235] Though the revamped tax code preserves charitable deductions, it essentially eliminates the tax incentive for charitable deduction for 30 million people.[236] An Indiana University study analyzed a similar proposal and concluded that the impact of this change to the tax code could decrease charitable donations by $13 billion annually.[237] While the study does not specify how much of this figure would impact museums, the AAM states that a third of museum funding comes from donations and that tax incentives are a significant motivating factor in this process.[238] For this reason, it is important that museums maintain an advocacy role to lobby for funding and donation protection at the state and national levels.

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[233] Heloise Wood, 'Trump renews bid to eradicate arts and library funding', *The Book Seller* (13 February 2018) <https://www.thebookseller.com/news/trump-proposes-eliminating-nea-neh-and-imls-731681> [accessed on 4 July 2018].
[234] 'Record Support from Senators for Office of Museum Services Funding', *American Alliance of Museums* (18 April 2018) <https://www.aam-us.org/2018/04/18/record-support-from-senators-for-office-of-museum-services-funding/> [accessed on 4 July 2018].
[235] Thirteen Republican congressmen and one Republican senator voted against the Tax Cuts and Job Act. See: Sophie Tatum, 'These are the Republicans who voted "no" on the tax bill', *CNN* (20 December 2017) <https://www.cnn.com/2017/12/19/politics/republicans-tax-vote/index.html> [accessed on 8 June 2018].
[236] 'Tax Proposal Released; Charitable Giving Endangered', *American Alliance of Museums* (2 November 2017) <https://www.aam-us.org/2017/11/02/tax-proposal-released-charitable-giving-endangered/> [accessed on 4 July 2018].
[237] 'Tax Policy and Charitable Giving', *Independent Sector* (May 2017) <https://independentsector.org/resource/tax-policy-charitable-giving/> [accessed on 4 July 2018].
[238] 'Policy Issues', *Alliance of American Museums* <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/advocacy/policy-issues/> [accessed on 5 July 2018].

When looking at the data, however, it is unclear why museum funding would be politically opposed. A report conducted by the AAM entitled *Museums and Public Opinion* states: 'Amidst today's contentious political climate, few issues garner such consistent and high approval as the support of American museums.'[239] Of those polled, 96% 'would think positively of their elected officials taking legislative action to support museums' and the same number 'want federal funding for museums to be maintained or increased'. These numbers reflect the average, but there was not a significant disparity between respondents with varying political views, community sizes, or previous museum attendance.[240] Despite this, museums continue to fight for funding (and for the mere existence of their funding bodies), furthering the need for their advocacy roles in American political discourse.[241]

Opposition to museum funding not only fails to acknowledge the educational and cultural impact of museums, but also their financial contributions to local, regional, and national economies. An AAM study entitled *Museums as Economic Engines* demonstrates the financial impact of museums.[242] While these results are not specific to African-American history museums—focusing instead on American museums more broadly—they provide valuable insight into the ways that museums contribute to economies. Museums have a significant impact on state economies—particularly the two states and the federal district relevant to this thesis. In 2016 in-state museums contributed $473 million to Alabama, $2.66 billion to Illinois, and $853 million to Washington, D.C. The study also includes a jobs analysis, concluding that in 2016 museums provided 9,410 jobs in Alabama, 38,524 in Illinois, and 9,110 in Washington, D.C. Similarly, museums were

[239] 'Museums and Public Opinion', p. 8.
[240] Of those polled, 97% of liberals and 93% of conservatives, 96% from very rural and 96% from large urban areas, and 97% of museum visitors and 95% of non-museum visitors support federal funding for museums.
[241] In fact, the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) releases 'Advocacy Alerts' when funding is at risk, including steps that people can take to rectify the issues at hand. Additionally, the AAM organizes an annual Museums Advocacy Day each year, wherein museum professionals and supporters gather in Washington, D.C. to advocate for museum funding. See: 'Advocacy', *American Alliance of Museums* <http://ww2.aam-us.org/advocacy> [accessed on 4 July 2018].
[242] 'Museums as Economic Engines', *American Alliance of Museums* (2018). Available online at: <https://www.aam-us.org/2018/01/19/museums-as-economic-engines/> [accessed on 15 September 2018].

responsible for $320 million in income to Alabama residents, $1.8 billion to Illinois residents, and $793 million to Washington, D.C. residents. Finally, data shows that though many museums are non-profit, they still generate an enormous amount of tax revenue. In 2016 Alabama museums paid $100.5 million in tax revenue, Illinois museums paid $683.2 million, and Washington, D.C. museums paid $158 million.[243]

In addition to these state contributions, the report also provides information about museums' broader impact on the national American economy. In 2016 museums contributed $50 billion to the GDP.[244] In the same year museums supported 726,000 jobs, including 372,111 jobs directly provided by the museum sector, and they contributed $12 billion in tax revenue.[245] This economic impact is widely acknowledged by the public, as demonstrated by *Museums and Public Opinion*, wherein data shows that 89% of people 'believe that museums contribute important economic benefits to their community'.[246] Remarkably, this reflects the attitudes from respondents in different political and residential demographics. Whether those polled live in small communities or large cities, whether they are liberal or conservative, and whether they are frequent museum visitors or non-visitors, respondents overwhelmingly recognize the ways that museums benefit economies.[247]

While the same extensive research has not been conducted in a British framework, a 2016/17 report from National Museums Liverpool reports similar findings: 'NML contributes £53 million and more than 1,200 jobs to the City Region, and the boost we

[243] Tax revenue in these figures includes both federal and state & local taxes. Alabama's $100.5 million tax revenue is split between $70.3 million in federal taxes and $30.2 million in state and local taxes; Washington, D.C.'s $158 million tax revenue is split between $120 million in federal taxes and $37.6 million in state and local taxes; Illinois' $683.2 million tax revenue is split between $429.1 million in federal taxes and $254.1 million in state and local taxes.
[244] This is comprised of direct, indirect, and induced effects of the impact of museums on the economy.
[245] The $12 billion in tax revenue is split between $8 billion at the federal level and $4 billion at the state and local level.
[246] 'Museums and Public Opinion', pp. 4, 7.
[247] 93% from small communities and 92% from large cities; 95% of liberals and 89% of conservatives; and 95% of regular museum visitors and 89% of non-visitors agreed that museums have a positive impact on the economy.

deliver to the wellbeing of our local audience could be worth as much as £130 million per year.'[248] All of these examples—whether local or national, whether American or British—demonstrate the powerful impact of museums on economies. While political and cultural moods undoubtedly influence opinions toward history museums, their economic offerings are certainly one of their most tangible contributions.

The general approval of museums, as well as the appreciation for their economic output, translates into recent museum visitor data. In 2016, the DuSable welcomed over 115,000 visitors—up 15% from the previous year.[249] The BCRI averages 150,000 visitors each year and new President and CEO Andrea Taylor is currently working toward boosting those figures further.[250] Interest in the NMAAHC has continued since its opening in September 2016. The museum received 2.4 million visitors in 2017 and 1.7 million as of October 2018.[251] Its 2018 numbers make the NMAAHC the Smithsonian's fourth-most popular museum—an impressive ascent for a young institution.[252] This high interest level correlates with the overwhelming supportive attitude toward museums in *Museums and Public Opinion*. Of those polled, 86% of respondents 'consistently support museums' and 97% 'believe that museums are educational assets for the communities' regardless of political ideology, community size, or previous museum attendance.[253] The report notes: 'It

[248] 'National Museums Liverpool Annual Review 2016/17', *National Museums Liverpool* (2017). Available online at: <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/about/corporate/annual-review/annual-review-2016-2017.aspx> [accessed on 15 September 2018].
[249] Steve Johnson, 'Chicago museums set attendance records in 2016' (25 January 2017) <http://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/museums/ct-museum-attendance-chicago-ent-0126-20170125-story.html> [accessed on 2 July 2018].
[250] Adam Ganucheau, 'Andrea Taylor's plans to revive Birmingham Civil Rights Institute', *AL.com* (1 March 2016) <https://www.al.com/bhammag/index.ssf/2016/03/andrea_taylors_plans_to_revive.html> [accessed on 10 July 2018].
[251] 'Visitor Statistics', *Smithsonian* <https://newsdesk.si.edu/about/stats> [accessed on 16 November 2018].
[252] Its attendance falls only behind the National Air and Space Museum (2.3 million), the National Museum of Natural History (2 million), and the National Museum of American History (1.7 million).
[253] 'Museums and Public Opinion', pp. 5, 6. Because the information in the text above is positioned within an American framework, including the ISM's visitor numbers may have been decontextualized. According to data from National Museums Liverpool, the ISM received 391,563 visitors in the 2017/2018 year (presumably this refers to the financial year). Broader museum interest in Britain has reduced in recent years. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which partially funds National Museums Liverpool (which, in turn, oversees the ISM) reported a total of 48.7m visitors in 2013/2014, 50.7m in 2014/2015, 47.6m in 2015/2016, 47.3m in 2016/2017, and 47.3m in 2017/2018. The decrease from 2015 on has sparked concern about whether the 'museum boom' may be over in Britain. See: 'Visitors to our

is compelling to consider that in a time when so much polarization exists between cultural and political communities, this study finds that Americans overwhelmingly think museums are important and worth supporting.'[254]

THINKING BROADLY ABOUT MEMORIALIZATION

When analyzing African-American history museums, it is important to contextualize the museum landscape by broadening ideas of memorialization and representations of black history. Considering black history museums within a wider dynamic of museums, public history, and memorialization—in addition to considering this dynamic within shifting political climates—provides comprehensive insight into the current state of black historical representation. There are three examples of this broad framework that are worth highlighting before the subsequent analytical chapters begin: gaining insight into African-American history museums by examining non-American museums that represent the history of the African diaspora; evaluating the current state of black history museum narratives by incorporating lessons from adjacent institutions; and tracking the cultural-political impact of black history museums by analyzing debates surrounding other forms of memorialization.

The first of these examples encourages the incorporation of museums representing black history outside of America. While the addition of Liverpool's International Slavery Museum provides a transatlantic element to this study, it is helpful to consider the ways that other nations address black Atlantic histories. Africa is the most obvious point of

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venues', *National Museums Liverpool* <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/about/corporate/visitor-information/index.aspx> [accessed on 27 November 2018]. DCMS annual reports can be downloaded from: 'Arts and culture: Research and statistics', <https://www.gov.uk/search/advanced?group=research_and_statistics&topic=%2Fsociety-and-culture%2Farts-and-culture> [accessed on 1 December 2018]. See also: Jonathan Jones, 'The drop in museum visitors reveals a nation without aspiration or hope', *The Guardian* (2 February 2017) <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2017/feb/02/drop-uk-museum-attendance> [accessed on 1 September 2018]; Martin Bailey, 'Is the UK museum boom over?', *The Art Newspaper* (26 March 2018) <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/is-the-uk-museum-boom-over> [accessed on 1 September 2018].

[254] Ibid, p. 3.

reference in these comparisons, and several museums—including the House of Slaves in Senegal, the Slave History Museum in Nigeria, and the Ghana National Museum on Slavery and Freedom (opening in 2022)—demonstrate the ways in which this continent has represented its darkest chapter.[255] Also in Africa, scholars interested in the museological representation of segregation and civil rights may find inspiration in institutions like South Africa's Apartheid Museum and the Mandela House.[256] Examples of the representation of slavery can also be found in Caribbean museums, such as the Memorial Acte in Guadeloupe, the Pompey Museum of Slavery and Emancipation in Nassau, the Kura Hulanda Museum in Curacao, and La Savane des Esclaves in Martinique.[257] These types of institutions throughout the Atlantic world offer an expansive understanding of black history museums, contextualized by broader black experiences throughout the Atlantic world.[258]

It is also important to recognize the common goals and challenges shared by African-American history museums and adjacent institutions representing comparable histories. For example, black history museums work toward rehumanizing large numbers, as well as crafting narratives that balance agency with abuse—both of these are also true of museums exploring the Holocaust, wars, genocides, or other human tragedies. There are

[255] See (alternative websites are provided when no official website exists): House of Slaves (Dakar, Senegal) <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/house-of-slaves>; Slave History Museum (Calabar, Nigeria) <http://slaveryandremembrance.org/partners/partner/?id=P0027>; Ghana National Museum on Slavery and Freedom (Cape Coast, Ghana) <http://www.gnmosaf.org/>.

[256] Apartheid Museum (Johannesburg, South Africa) <https://www.apartheidmuseum.org/>; Mandela House (Soweto, South Africa) <http://www.mandelahouse.com/>.

[257] See: Memorial Acte (Pointe-a-Pitre, Guadeloup) <http://memorial-acte.fr/>; Pompey Museum of Slavery and Emancipation (Nassau, Bahamas) <http://www.ammc-bahamas.com/pompey-museum/>; Kura Hulanda Museum (Willemstad, Curacao) <https://www.curacao.com/en/directory/do/museums/kura-hulanda-museum/>; La Savane des Esclaves (Les Trois-Îlets, Martinique) <http://www.lasavanedesesclaves.fr/>.

[258] These expansive views can also offer unexpected connections; for example, David Adjaye, lead designer for the NMAAHC, has designed the new Ghana National Museum on Slavery and Freedom. See: Hassan Mohammed Yokubu, 'Ghana National Museum on Slavery', *Arch2o* <https://www.arch2o.com/ghana-national-museum-on-slavery-gnmos-adjaye-associates/> [accessed on 30 June 2018]; 'The Project', *Ghana National Museum on Slavery and Freedom* <http://www.gnmosaf.org/the-project/> [accessed on 30 June 2018]; 'Civic Buildings', *Adjaye Associates* <http://www.adjaye.com/projects/civic-buildings/cape-coast-slavery-museum/> [accessed on 30 June 2018].

many museums in the United States dedicated to these topics, and scholars can find comparative examples in institutions like the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C, the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., or the National September 11 Memorial and Museum in Manhattan.[259] Similarly, studying Civil War museums in America can provide insight into shifting political climates and lingering cultural tensions between the North and South—two themes that often appear in black history museums. To examine these connections, scholars can look to museums like the American Civil War Museum in Richmond or the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg.[260]

Finally, in order to grasp the broader dynamic between racial history, public history, and memorialization, it is important to remember that black history museums are only one form of historical representation. African-American history museums have received a significant amount of news coverage amid the opening of institutions like the NMAAHC and Mississippi Civil Rights Museum; however, contemporary debates surrounding Confederate monuments have caused ordinary people to pay more attention to public history, heritage tourism, and civic commemoration. This recent spotlight cast on monuments has demonstrated that museums, their narratives, and their visitors are in conversation with other vehicles of commemoration. Moreover, it is also likely that museum visitors will attend other sites in the surrounding commemorative landscape; in this way then, black history museum narratives may be considered alongside those of other historic sites. This process of collective absorption creates a tapestry of memorialization that may be comparative, competitive, or complementary. For these reasons, black history museums should be considered within a broad framework of relevant monuments,

[259] See: United States Holocaust Memorial and Museum (Washington, D.C.) <https://www.ushmm.org/>; National Museum of the American Indian (Washington, D.C.) <http://www.nmai.si.edu/visit/washington/>; National September 11 Memorial and Museum (New York City) <https://www.911memorial.org>.
[260] See: American Civil War Museum (Richmond, VA) <https://acwm.org>; National Civil War Museum (Harrisburg, PA) <http://www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org>.

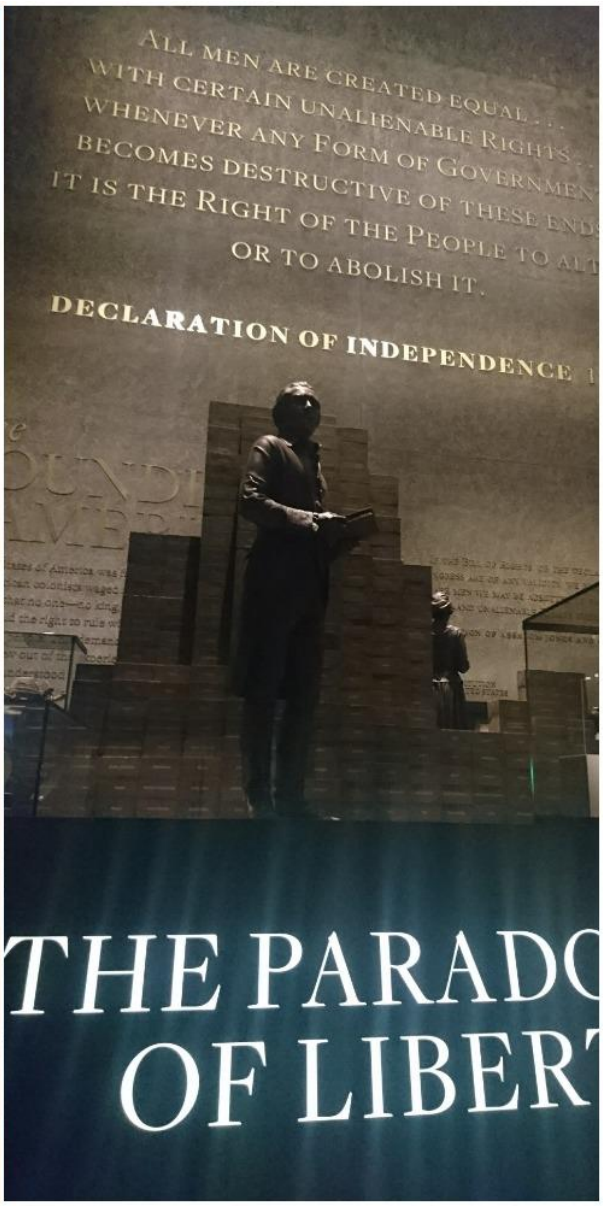
memorials, plantations, tours, libraries, living history sites, and place names in order to consider museum narratives through the lens of the average visitor.

With these three strategies in mind, this thesis broadens and contextualizes the study of African-American history museums. While subsequent analytical chapters reference the commemorative landscape and some relevant adjacent museums, many of these considerations go unmentioned in order to maintain textual focus and cohesion; however, though this thesis does not explicitly reference some of these elements, their existence, similarities, and differences have implicitly influenced the nature of this work. It is also important to note that these influences have been incorporated with an awareness of the limitations of these comparisons. While broadening scholarly understanding of memorialization can produce insightful conclusions, each form of historical representation (as well as further distinguishing elements, such as temporal and spatial considerations) should also be recognized for its unique nature. Balancing these considerations by broadening the gaze of historical memorialization without decontextualizing each individual form of commemoration allows scholars to identify similarities within the natural limits of distinctions.

2

Representations of Slavery and the Civil War

'We have to do with the past only as we can make it useful to the present and to the future.'—Frederick Douglass



INTRODUCTION

Within the context of American history, the story of slavery is unique in its lasting ability to appeal, to appal, and to awe.[1] As such, it is easy to understand why black history museums devote so much space to examining the extensive era. Even in museums that span the whole of African-American history, slavery is often presented as the foundation of the entire narrative—a period that must be thoroughly understood in order to progress in an education of black history.[2] Situating slavery as the cornerstone of black history presents powerful opportunities for curators to creatively and authentically engage with the era's multi-faceted elements. However, slavery's sprawling nature necessitates the period's separation into more digestible segments in museums and academia. Moreover, categorizing such a large age into smaller periods encourages closer, more detailed analyses of the era's nuances and avoids decontextualization by acknowledging that each smaller period is defined by its own cultures, politics, and ideologies. This chapter will break down the broad era to mirror the ways that visitors approach its representation in museums—not as one topic of 'slavery' but rather as five distinct periods that make up this significant chapter of Atlantic history.

The first period that will be examined in this chapter is West African history. This section considers three aspects of West African historical representation. First, it identifies

[1] This has been particularly true for the last couple of decades, during which public interest in slavery has increased exponentially. As Ira Berlin writes: 'Indeed, the last years of the twentieth century and the first years of the twenty-first have witnessed an extraordinary resurgence of popular interest in slavery, which has stimulated its study and provided the occasion for a rare conversation between historians and an interested public. Slavery has a greater presence in American life now than at any time since the Civil War ended. The intense engagement over the issues of slavery signals…a crisis in American race relations that necessarily elevates the significance of the study of the past in the search for social justice.' See: Ira Berlin, 'American Slavery in History and Memory and the Search for Social Justice', *The Journal of American History* 90.4 (2004), 1251-1268 (p. 1251).

[2] The positioning of slavery as the cornerstone of African-American history mirrors recent shifts in the mainstream American historical narrative, which increasingly accepts the central role of slavery in the nation's development. Berlin also comments on this topic: 'Simply put, American history cannot be understood without slavery. Slavery shaped the American economy, its politics, its culture, and its fundamental principles. For most of American history, the society of the mainland colonies and then the United States was one of slaveholders and slaves.' See: Berlin, 'American Slavery in History and Memory', p. 1257.

why it is important to root African-American historical narratives in West Africa, arguing that when narratives begin in this region, rather than on the ships or shores, representations offer a more comprehensive account of black history and, most importantly, challenge long-held misconceptions about an 'uncivilized' West Africa. The section then examines the complexities of West African history—such as romanticized depictions of the region and the homogenization of 'Africans'—and highlights some of the challenges that curators may face when representing this period. Finally, this section explores the internationalization of West African museum narratives, pointing to three ways that this method impacts museological representations of the period—identifying pre-transatlantic slave trade connections between West Africans and the broader Atlantic, introducing visitors to the roots of the African diaspora, and incorporating the museological method of internationalization into displays.

The second section of this chapter explores museological representations of the transatlantic slave trade. It begins by considering how museums convey large numbers without losing the human element. Next, it examines the ways that the brutality of the slave trade is represented in museum displays, with a particular focus on balancing brutality with agency to craft authentic narratives. The section then highlights aspects of the transatlantic slave trade history that can sometimes be overlooked, such as the precolonial Americas, the economics of the slave trade, and individual ships and journeys. The method of localization will then be explored, analyzing the ways that localizing slave trade displays impacts broader narratives. Finally, this section considers the element of design and atmosphere, questioning how light, color, sound, and space can contribute to slave trade narratives and visitor experiences.

Once the era of slavery has been contextualized through the examination of West Africa and the transatlantic slave trade, the third section of this chapter addresses the ways that slavery itself is represented in black history museums. This section first analyzes

representations of dehumanization and violence, focusing primarily on the comparisons between emotional and physical representations. Next, it considers the representation of agency in enslaved Africans and African Americans, as well as highlighting representations of the spectrum of agency ranging from subtle resistance to overt rebellion. Finally, this section seeks to reconcile these two themes, questioning how museums balance dehumanization/violence and agency to produce narratives that authentically convey the multi-faceted slavery experience.

The fourth section of this chapter considers museological engagements with the long sectional crisis—defined here as the period beginning in early 18th century abolitionist sentiment and ending just before the Civil War. This section begins by arguing why the timeline of the sectional crisis should be elongated to incorporate early slavery debates of the late 18th century, as well as questioning how this period is represented in museums. It then analyzes representations of the abolitionist movement, questioning how elements like diversity of thought, multi-racial abolitionist efforts, abolitionist leaders, and the marketing of abolitionism shape these narratives. The section concludes by identifying the omission of proslavery thought in these museums, arguing that slavery and abolitionist narratives would benefit from the inclusion of this difficult topic.

The final section of this chapter will focus on representations of the Civil War. It first considers how these displays frame the war's origins, connecting this aspect of the history to cultural-political debates that continue to divide Americans today. The next section questions how balanced wartime narratives are crafted by focusing on representations of both black and white soldier experiences on one hand and Union and Confederate narratives on the other. It then highlights some topics that were omitted from these displays; most notably, it argues that displays on the Lost Cause—though not present in any museum in this study—would teach visitors about the Confederate interpretation of the war, which still impacts the way many Americans frame the period. This section

concludes by identifying missed opportunities to connect to surrounding commemorative landscapes, incorporating the theme of place into the Civil War analyses.

WEST AFRICAN HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

The history of the African diaspora is rooted in West Africa, a region of complex histories and accomplished cultures that would be ravaged during the transatlantic slave trade. Because understanding West African history is central to contextualizing African-American history and countering myths about Africans, it is important that curators authentically approach its representation by highlighting both the advancements and the issues within these societies. At times, curators presenting narratives intended to challenge misunderstandings can crop out the more contentious elements of history, so this balance can be difficult to achieve. This section will examine the ways that the ISM and NMAAHC navigate these challenges and engage with West African history, as well as how museums approach these topics more broadly.[3]

ROOTING NARRATIVES

When representing African-American history, museum journeys tend to start either by exploring the transatlantic slave trade or West African history and culture. When museums introduce the African-American historical timeline with a discussion about West Africa, their narratives are benefited in two ways. First, beginning the narrative in West Africa encourages visitors to understand that the roots of enslaved Africans do not lie on ships

[3] Readers will notice the absence of the DuSable in this section, as this institution (as of my visit in September 2016) overlooks the topic of West African history and begins the primary exhibit with the transatlantic slave trade. Though the DuSable has included West Africa in past exhibits (when the museum was featured on *Great Museums* in 2002 the filmed museum tour began with a gallery entitled *Africa Speaks*, which centered on a collection of artifacts and provided insight into African heritage), during my research trip in September 2016 references to the region were few and far in between. Because the region has been more extensively covered by the DuSable in the past, the museum may address this omission in the future. To respond to the current omissions, this section will also highlight the benefits of engaging with these topics more generally and, in turn, what museums like the DuSable lose by failing to root their African-American historical narratives in West Africa. See: 'American Soul: The DuSable Museum of African-American History', *Great Museums* (Great Museums Television, 14 November 2002).

crossing the deadly Middle Passage or on the shores of the Americas. While the American slavery narrative tends to focus more on the journey from enslavement to freedom, learning about West African cultures and histories in their own right—independent of transatlantic slavery—creates a more comprehensive narrative that incorporates the earlier transition from freedom to enslavement.

Second, understanding cultures and achievements within West Africa challenges the Euro-centric division of the world into 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' societies. The idea of African barbarism was used to defend the institution of slavery—with apologists sometimes arguing that enslaved Africans were fortunate to have been brought into civilized western societies.[4] These views were reinforced by racist interpretations of history by scholars like Ulrich B. Phillips in the early 20th century and it was not until decades later that this narrative was pushed out of mainstream scholarship with the development of the African-American historical field.[5] This misunderstanding of Africa was imbedded so deeply into collective thought that even some 20th century African Americans conflated Africans with savagery.[6] While improved education and increased cultural awareness has

[4] For example, John C. Calhoun explained in an 1837 speech to the United States Senate that slavery was a 'positive good'. He said, in part: 'Never before has the black race of Central Africa, from the dawn of history to the present day, attained a condition so civilized and so improved, not only physically, but morally and intellectually.' These ideas persisted after slavery in what historians call retrogression (the idea that, once freed, African Americans would revert back to their natural, barbaric African state). A *Charleston News and Courier* article from 1898, for example, notes: 'Everybody knows that when freed from the compelling influence of the white man he reverts by a law of nature to natural barbarism in which he was created in the jungles of Africa.' See: Kenneth Goings, 'Aunt Jemima and Uncle Mose Travel the USA', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2.3-4 (2001), 131-161 (p. 136); cites *Charleston News and Courier* (11 January 1898), p. 514.

[5] Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1918). The rise of the mainstream African-American historical field began in the 1950s. See: Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-bellum South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1956); Stanley Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959).

[6] In *Up From Slavery* Booker T. Washington exhibits this understanding of cultural superiority: 'Then…we must acknowledge that…the ten million Negroes inhabiting this country, who themselves or whose ancestors went through the school of American slavery, are in a stronger and more hopeful condition, materially, intellectually, morally, and religiously, than is true of an equal number of black people in any other portion of the globe. This is so to such an extent that Negroes in this country, who themselves or whose forefathers went through the school of slavery, are constantly returning to Africa as missionaries to enlighten those who remained in the fatherland. This I say, not to justify slavery…but to call attention to a fact, and to show how Providence so often uses men and institutions to accomplish a purpose. When persons ask me in these days how, in the midst of what sometimes seem hopelessly discouraging conditions, I can have such faith in the future of my race in this country, I remind them of the wilderness

resulted in a greater understanding of African cultures, remnants of these 19th century views persist in some circles; for example, in January 2018 President Trump reportedly complained about immigrants from 'shithole' African countries, lamenting that Nigerian migrants would never want to 'go back to their huts' once they had seen the United States.[7] Because these misconceptions linger in modern thought, museums can counter these ideas by providing information about West Africa's cultures, histories, and societies.

To highlight the richness of West African cultures, both the ISM and the NMAAHC begin their museum journeys with a discussion of the region.[8] While the NMAAHC begins its broader *Slavery and Freedom* gallery with an exploration of West African history, the ISM dedicates an entire gallery, *Life in West Africa*, to the topic. Both of these museum narratives effectively root the African-American narrative in West Africa, though the displays emphasize different aspects of the history. Representation of the region can be categorized into internal and external displays, depending on whether the museum focuses more on domestic achievements, societies, and cultures or on international connections and influences.

While the NMAAHC does explore some aspects of domestic West African history and culture, these topics are secondary to emphases on international matters.[9] The ISM, on

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through which and out of which, a good Providence has already led us.' See: Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York and London: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995), p. 8. Over sixty years after the publication of Washington's autobiography, Malcolm X explained how this image of Africa dominated his understanding of the continent as a child: '…I somehow never thought, then, of the black people in Africa. My image of Africa, at that time, was of naked savages, cannibals, monkeys and tigers and steaming jungles.' See: Alex Haley and Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (London: Hutchinson of London, 1966), p. 85.

[7] Eli Watkins and Abby Phillip, 'Trump decries immigrants from "shithole countries" coming to US', *CNN* (12 January 2018) <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/01/11/politics/immigrants-shithole-countries-trump/index.html> [accessed on 19 January 2018].

[8] The BCRI begins its museum journey with a video overviewing black history through the Jim Crow era. While West African history is covered in the movie, there are no displays on this topic so it has been omitted from the discussion here. On the other hand, the DuSable neglects West African history entirely and begins the museum journey with the transatlantic slave trade.

[9] Though the NMAAHC narrative focuses more on external components of West African history (rather than the ISM's focus on West African life, art, and culture), the NMAAHC building itself is inspired by West African design. Lead designer David Adjaye said that the museum's structure is based on late 19th and early 20th century tribal Yoruban sculpture, which creates a connection between African and African-American cultures. Nicolai Ouroussof of *The New York Times* adds: '[I]t also carried subtler cultural associations: the

the other hand, focuses almost entirely on West African cultures, with a central theme of sophistication and advancement. Annotations and displays dotting the room reinforce this theme—one, for example, reads: 'The Africa "discovered" by Europeans in the 15th century was neither backward nor barbarous compared with Europe. It was simply different.' This message of an advanced civilization is effectively conveyed in the center of the gallery. Among a series of displays highlighting daily life, tribes, and family structures in the region sits a replication of an Igbo family compound, which includes a large *obi* (meeting house) and two smaller houses. Through this replication, a diverse artifact collection, and informative placards, *Life in West Africa* demonstrates the richness and successes of a region that has long been dismissed as 'uncivilized' by westerners.

The replication of an Igbo family compound, ISM

Also playing a primary role in the ISM—in contrast to the NMAAHC—is West African music. When visitors first step into the ISM, they are greeted by art, music, and other highlights of culture—not from Britain, America, or Europe, but from West Africa. Artistic culture is on display throughout the gallery: a rolling video shows the Okifi

stacked wood blocks, which evoke an African version of the Parthenon caryatids, remind us that Washington's neo-Classical buildings represent only part of a vastly more intricate cultural narrative. The new design's ziggurat-shaped form evokes the work of Constantin Brancusi, one of many Western artists who were profoundly influenced by African tribal art.' See: Nicolai Ouroussoff, 'Tracing the Threads That Join America and Africa', *The New York Times* (3 May 2009) <www.nytimes.com/2009/05/04/arts/design/04muse.html> [accessed on 24 June 2015].

Masquerade in Enugu State, Nigeria, West African instruments are displayed behind glass, and visitors can listen to several examples of traditional music. In fact, West African music reaches most areas of the gallery, providing a background sound that is further complemented by the intentional use of color and lighting to cultivate a light and bright atmosphere that contrasts sharply with the darkness of the subsequent *Enslavement and the Middle Passage* gallery.[10]

While the NMAAHC undoubtedly places more of an emphasis on external aspects of West African history, both institutions approach their internal representations through artifact display. At the ISM, a collection including a Nigerian Qur'an, pottery, swords, textiles, masks, headdresses, and many other artifacts ranging from the Stone Age to the 20th century line the walls, teaching visitors about religion, material culture, trade, and economic systems.[11] Similarly, in addition to a series of placards highlighting various kingdoms and peoples, the NMAAHC displays an artifact collection—including an ivory signal horn, an Akan gold pendant, and a bronze bell from Benin—that teaches visitors about communities, warfare, spirituality, and material culture.

In addition to these internal representations, the displays at the ISM and NMAAHC also examine connections between West Africa and the Atlantic world before the transatlantic slave trade dominated international relations from the 16th century onward. An

[10] As mentioned above, music is heavily utilized in *Life in West Africa* but not in the West African portion of *Slavery and Freedom*. This may be due to the different layouts of the two galleries. The ISM's *Life in West Africa* is openly structured with plenty of room for visitors to gather around interactive displays (for example, watching videos and listening to audio); by contrast, the beginning of the NMAAHC's *Slavery and Freedom* is compact and congested, and—with the exception of one video before the displays begin—displays are largely artifact-based, which encourages visitors to keep moving along.

[11] Artifacts are more prominent in *Life in West Africa* than in the ISM's other two galleries, which explore the slave trade/slavery and more recent black histories, respectively. A.V. Seaton writes about the broader forces behind these artifact disparities: 'One of the problems of establishing the [Transatlantic Slavery Gallery, the ISM's predecessor] was…finding artifacts. Many of those selected for display have no intrinsic association with slavery (e.g., African works of art, Benin jewelry, maps, guns, paintings and engravings), but were included to contextualize the culture of African from which slaves came. In short, the absence of physical evidence is more acute than in the US and may be seen as one inhibitor of slavery heritage development.' Thus, he argues, slavery representation is somewhat easier in the United States, where heritage developers have greater access to historical artifacts associated with slavery. See: A.V. Seaton, 'Sources of Slavery—Destinations of Slavery: The Silences and Disclosures of Slavery Heritage in the UK and US', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 2.3-4 (2001), 107-219 (pp. 116-118).

external examination of the region is included in some of the ISM displays, though trading links tend to be considered more within the slave trade in the subsequent gallery entitled *Enslavement and the Middle Passage*. The NMAAHC, on the other hand, largely focuses its West African narrative on the region's international relationships. Both institutions display a collection of trading-based artifacts, including manillas, cowrie shells, beads, and guns. The NMAAHC goes further to emphasize these international connections by highlighting influential Africans (including Queen Nzinga of Ndongo, Dom Miguel de Castro, Juan Garrido, and Don Francisco de Arobe) who were successful in forming strong relationships with people in Europe and the Americas.[12] By dedicating space to these individuals, the NMAAHC takes steps toward rehumanizing and contextualizing the regions most impacted by the transatlantic slave trade. The focus on international relationships segues into an analysis of European countries leading up to the transatlantic slave trade, which ultimately shifts the focus away from Africa and concludes the visitors' glance into West African life.

[12] Ana Nzinga Mbande (b. 1583; d. 1663) was the queen of the Mbundu people (in modern-day Angola) from 1624 to 1663, and was celebrated for her brilliance in politics, military strategy, and diplomacy. Dom Miguel de Castro (birth and death unknown) was a diplomat who worked on resolving political and trade issues between powers in Africa and Europe. Juan Garrido (b. ca. 1480; d. ca. 1550) was a West African-born Spanish conquistador who served alongside explorers like Hernando Cortes and Ponce de León to conquer various regions of the Caribbean and the Americas. Don Francisco de Arobe (birth and death unknown) was the leader of Esmeralda, a community in Spanish-controlled Ecuador that was established by runaway slaves.

West African display, NMAAHC

The ISM's *Life in West Africa* and the NMAAHC's West Africa display in *Slavery and Freedom* effectively counter misconceptions about 'uncivilized' societies by demonstrating the sophisticated and accomplished cultures of the region. Both museums push back against the 'barbarous African' stereotype; however, engagement with related proslavery arguments—and later manifestations of this ideology in American thought, including its lasting impression on African Americans—could have provided an interesting juxtaposition between the realities and misconceptions of African life. Moreover, the inclusion of this information would explain to visitors why it is so important to emphasize the advancements of West African societies. In other words, these displays engage with the question of 'what' without addressing the question of 'so what?'—a missed opportunity that could offer visitors a glimpse into the curatorial decision-making process.

EMBRACING COMPLEXITY

While it is important for museums to demonstrate West African achievements, effective displays also confront more difficult aspects within these societies in order to authentically represent the period. The binary tone that can accompany black history narratives (the association of good with black and bad with white) can result in the omission of inconvenient truths that fall outside of this oversimplified algorithm. Because of this, black narratives may sometimes be idealized either intentionally or unintentionally. Perhaps one of the most elucidating examples of the tendency to idealize black bodies can be found in Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between the World and Me*. In the book, Coates details his search for a 'trophy case' of black individuals, who he initially felt were more prone to morality than their white counterparts. His education, first from poetry and then at Howard University, ultimately challenged Coates' misconception of inherent black superiority as he realized that black people were equally capable of corruption and hatred:

> *It began to strike me that the point of my education was a kind of discomfort, was the process that would…break all the dreams, all the comforting myths of Africa, of America, and everywhere, and would leave me only with humanity in all its terribleness. And there was so much terrible out there, even among us....Being black did not immunize us from history's logic or the lure of the Dream. The writer…must be wary of every Dream and every nation, even his own nation.*[13]

The tendency to idealize African societies often occurs within the African diaspora, as those of African descent attempt to foster connections to the continent.[14] As a result, it is understandable that this romanticized view of Africa occurs in disaporic museums. In his seminal study on slavery heritage sites in Ghana, Edward M. Bruner writes that many Ghanaians felt that African Americans could be almost 'too emotional' when visiting these

[13] Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, 2015), pp. 52-53.
[14] Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), p. 117.

sites, showing a disparity in the diasporic experiences. He explains the 'diaspora imagination':

> *Obviously, Ghanaians have not shared the diaspora experience, and they may not have read works by such writers as Maya Angelou, Richard Wright, or Eddy L. Harris. In black diaspora literature, there is an almost mythic image of Africa as a Garden of Eden. For black American men in that popular literature, a return to Africa is a return to manhood, to a land where they feel they belong, where they can reconnect with their ancestry. The kings and queens and paramount chiefs of West Africa represent royalty and dignity, resonating powerfully in the diaspora imagination. In Africa, black people are in control, are free and independent, as opposed to the condition of being a disempowered minority in America.*[15]

While romantic views of Africa are evident in the literature he references, some African writers, such as Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, have made clear distinctions between African and African American racial experiences in order to explain these distinct views.[16] Appiah writes that while African Americans have been a marginalized group in the United States, Africans 'came from cultures where black people were in the majority and where lives continued to be largely controlled by indigenous and moral cognitive conceptions' and thus 'they had no reason to believe that they were inferior to white people and they had, correspondingly, less reason to resent them.'[17] Bruner's analyses—as well as the disparities in the literature cited—could explain to museum scholars why American and British-based museums may be reluctant to highlight

[15] Edward M. Bruner, 'Tourism in Ghana: The Representation of Slavery and the Return of the Black Diaspora', *American Anthropologist* 98.2 (1996), 290-304 (p. 293). See also: Caryl Philips, *The Atlantic Sound* (London: Faber, 2000); Alan Rice, 'Museums, Memorials and Plantation Houses in the Black Atlantic: Slavery and the Development of Dark Tourism'. In Richard Sharpley and Philip R. Stone (eds), *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism* (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2009), 224-246.
[16] In reference to 'black diaspora literature', Bruner cites: Richard Wright, *Black Power* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954); Maya Angelou, *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986); Eddy L. Harris, *Native Stranger: A Black American's Journey into the Heart of Africa* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).
[17] Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 6-7.

the more problematic aspects of African history, for fear of causing disillusionment in visitors who hold the continent in such esteem in their 'diaspora imaginations'.[18]

In museum analyses of West African displays, this reluctance becomes clear. While West Africans struggled with their own societal problems, these issues are rarely highlighted in museum displays. Rather than hosting a discussion about the problematic elements of these societies, curators seem to prioritize the importance of demonstrating the richness African cultures. Perhaps they fear that highlighting these issues will muddy the waters and detract from the intended narrative. In this way, representing an accurate account of West African history conflicts with representing an authentic account of the region—a focus that requires confronting uncomfortable truths objectively.

The displays in the ISM and NMAAHC present an accurate representation of the merits of West African history whilst failing to present an authentic portrayal of the region—a societal tapestry in which cultures balance achievements with shortcomings. While no information in these displays is technically inaccurate, the omission of certain details skews the narrative and produces inauthentically idealized African societies. In these displays, visitors learn about West Africa's impressive trading networks, but not its rigid class hierarchies; they listen to traditional music, but are unlikely to read about violent conflicts between villages or tribes; they stand in awe of beautiful West African textiles and pottery, but will not learn about the practice of human sacrifice. These

[18] Bruner goes farther to highlight the disparities between African and African Americans at slavery sites. Among the differences that Bruner highlights are the Ghanaians' reluctance to put blacks and whites in opposition against one another in displays (as opposed to African Americans' eagerness to do so), the confession of many Ghanaians that they find African Americans 'racist', and the belief of some Ghanaians that modern African Americans are somewhat fortunate that their ancestors were taken to America, where they have since become economically advantaged and have a higher standard of living than modern Ghanaians. Most interesting was the tension arising from the use of the Ghanaian term *obruni*—a term meaning 'whiteman' and 'foreigner' that is used to describe African Americans (as well as all other white and Asian visitors), which African Americans find offensive due to their own feeling of brotherhood with West Africans. For these reasons, it is important to acknowledge the connections of the African diaspora while also being aware of the differences between African experiences and African diasporic (outside of Africa, but of African descent) experiences. For more on Bruner's arguments see: Bruner, 'Tourism in Ghana', pp. 294-297.

omissions result not in a tapestry of history, but rather in a one-dimensional praise of societies that were just as susceptible to flaws as any western nation.[19]

Touting the accolades of these communities without honestly discussing their flaws is similar to Coates' difficulty in coming to terms with Queen Nzinga—a figure who is uncritically praised in the NMAAHC for her power and influence.[20] Though he had previously considered Nzinga an example of black excellence, Coates ultimately learned difficult truths that shattered his praiseworthy approach to blackness:

> *Among the people in that room, all those centuries ago, my body…was not closest to the queen's but to her adviser's, who'd been broken down into a chair so that a queen, heir to everything she'd ever seen, could sit.*[21]

This uncomfortable realization is a process awaiting museum visitors, many of whom are likely to understand history through the same binary lens that Coates explains—a lens often reinforced in history museums. In this way, curators could trust that their audiences are capable of being challenged and that they may be open to recalibrating their understanding of balanced historical objectivity.

In addition to the benefits of societal complexity within museological representations of West Africa, it is also important that museum visitors do not consider the first generation of enslaved individuals as one homogenous group of 'Africans', but rather as diverse groups of people from various regions who were often foreign to one

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[19] Some people may argue that these negative aspects should not be incorporated in displays, as they were used to justify slavery and colonialism. Though this line of reasoning is understandable given the sensitivity of the issue, I argue that including these issues—not decontextualized, as they were originally positioned within proslavery arguments, but rather in a balanced way that is contextualized by an examination of the advancements and richness of these societies—can provide visitors with a more comprehensive historical understanding of West Africa.

[20] The annotation introducing Queen Nzinga (also known as Queen Nzingha) strikes a celebratory tone that glosses over the problematic aspects of her reign that bothered Coates. While the annotation mentions the domestic slave trade, curators navigate around her participation in the institution: 'Queen of the Mbundu people, Nzingha fought for roughly 40 years to protect her subjects and homeland. She also provided sanctuary to runaway slaves in present-day Angola. Nzingha led her warriors into battle, played European powers against each other, and formed alliances with other Africans. Ultimately, Queen Nzingha and her people faced a cruel choice—enslave others or become enslaved themselves. The Mbundu engaged in the trade as a means of survival.'

[21] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, p. 54.

another. As Tibbles writes: '[Enslaved Africans] found themselves thrown together with people from different parts of Africa, speaking different languages in conditions of horror, deprivation, and violence.'[22] Because of this, many slaves who were new to the Americas could not communicate with each other and had no collective sense of home. Ultimately, slaves cultivated shared cultures and communities, but this should not be confused with an initial familiarity among West Africans arriving in America.

The ISM and the NMAAHC effectively convey to visitors that they should not consider West Africans as a monolithic group. The ISM does not explicitly write about this topic, but displays examining the cultures and histories of the Igbo, San, Yoruba, and Asante indicate the ways that people were grouped in the region. Though this distinction could be further explained, the non-homogenous nature of West Africa is apparent throughout *Life in West Africa*.[23] The NMAAHC, on the other hand, states explicitly that visitors should not consider people of the region as a singular group by clarifying that '[i]n the 1400s Africans did not see themselves as "African"' and by explaining that Africans did not identify as a collective group during the years of the slave trade, associating themselves instead with diverse societies within city- and nation-states. The non-monolithic nature of West Africans is reinforced in subsequent displays that identify several kingdoms (such as Benin and Dahomey) and groups (such as the Mbundu and the Bakongo), but the direct explanation of this fact leaves little room for misunderstanding.

When museums challenge the monolithic misunderstanding of West Africans, the opportunity to confront less comfortable aspects of the historical narrative arises. In

[22] Anthony Tibbles, 'Introduction'. In Anthony Tibbles (ed.), *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity* (Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool, 2005), p. 13.

[23] When discussing the ISM's predecessor, the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery, curator Anthony Tibbles explained a similar goal: 'One of the main intentions was to get across the point that Africa should not be portrayed only as a place where Europeans got "slaves". To remind visitors that Africa…had a diversity of states, societies and cultures.' See: Seaton, 'Sources of Slavery—Destinations of Slavery', p. 114; cites Anthony Tibbles, 'Against Human Dignity: The Development of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery at Merseyside Maritime Museum, Liverpool', *Proceedings, IXth International Congress of Maritime Museums*, 95-102 (p. 98).

addition to introducing visitors to contentious societal issues within West Africa, examining difficult topics like domestic slavery in West Africa or African slave traders are particular challenges for museums. The misunderstanding of those populating the region—or, sometimes, the entire continent—as one homogenous group has a ripple-effect on other aspects of African history; for example; grouping West Africans together results in people trying to comprehend how 'Africans' betrayed other 'Africans' during this period.

When the homogenization myth is debunked, however, participants in the slave trade can be viewed within their own context without the barrier of perceived collective identity. When museum visitors understand that 'Africans' did not identify as Africans, West Africans, or even as national citizens (a 'nation' being a European concept), but rather as members of kinships, tribes, and villages, visitors may be encouraged to shed their western-centric presentism to understand the complexity of this era. Of course, identifying these contentious aspects within African history will likely still prove challenging, but museum displays that incorporate African slavery and slave traders can produce thorough, fearless narratives that encourage visitors to embrace uncomfortable truths.[24]

[24] The difficulty of representing African slave traders also arises at African slave heritage sites. In his study of Ghanaian slave sites, Edward Bruner writes: '[African Americans] understand that Africans themselves were active participants in the slave trade, that at first the Gold Coast was a slave importing area, that the Europeans established positions on the coast and did not themselves conduct slave raids into the interior.' In these cases, Ana Lucia Araujo argues that Africans may be more reluctant than African Americans to represent African slave traders because living descendants represent the historic divide between those whose ancestors participated in the slave trade and those whose ancestors were sold into slavery. In a different study on slave fortifications in Ghana, however, Nathan Austin found that it was sometimes the African Americans—rather than the Africans—who dismissed African involvement in the slave trade. He writes: 'They argued that African involvement was "…a total fabrication" or that "…Africans were involuntary participants in the slave trade as a result of the deceit of the White slavers."' This process, Austin argues, serves as a reminder of the ways that modern race relations influence visitors at these sites. These observations by scholars like Bruner, Araujo, and Austin demonstrate the contentiousness of this topic in other arenas of historical representation, allowing for comparisons to challenges facing African-American history museums. See: Bruner, 'Tourism in Ghana', p. 295; Ana Lucia Araujo, 'Welcome the Diaspora: Slave Trade Heritage Tourism and the Public Memory of Slavery', *Ethnologies* 32.2 (2010), 145-178 (p. 149); Nathan K. Austin, 'Managing Heritage Attractions: Marketing Challenges at Sensitive Historical Sites', *International Journal of Tourism Research* 4 (2002), 447-457 (p. 453).

While the ISM does not explore more contentious aspects of African history, the NMAAHC uses some displays to introduce the African domestic slave trade and slave traders. At various points in the West African displays, the NMAAHC educates visitors about domestic slave trade ('slavery was everywhere'; 'slavery was not based on perceptions of race'; 'slavery was a temporary status'). These types of displays help visitors understand the historical contextualization of slavery—an institution that far precedes its most infamous and deadly manifestation in the transatlantic slave trade. Some displays engage with the difficult reality of African traders' role in the slave trade, but this topic could use more exploration due to its complexity. Though displays challenge the myth of African homogenization, which prefaces discussions about African slave traders, this connection could be further clarified to highlight the connection between these two pieces of information. While the NMAAHC does not explore these topics as thoroughly as it could, the displays succeed in introducing difficult topics within West African history. Unfortunately, the ISM omits these conversations entirely and, as such, may consider working toward a more balanced and authentic history of this region.

INTERNATIONALIZING HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

Representing West African history also introduces internationalization and the African diaspora, which impacts museum narratives in three ways. First, this method introduces visitors to the international connections within West Africa before the transatlantic slave trade changed these dynamics so drastically. Understanding these relationships helps to position West African history within the broader developments of the Atlantic world, and effective museum displays convey these dynamics by exploring the ways that Africans and Europeans created not only trading networks, but also networks of ideas in which people shared knowledge, religions, and cultures. This historical truth stands in stark contrast to the isolationism that accompanies the misunderstanding of an 'uncivilized Africa'. Both

the ISM and the NMAAHC emphasize cultural and intellectual sharing in the centuries before the transatlantic slave trade, though the external focus of the NMAAHC results in a more detailed examination of these global links. Despite the differences produced by the internal and external approaches in each of these museums, the displays at both institutions effectively demonstrate the ways that contemporary West Africans' intellectual, spiritual, and economic prowess transcended continental borders.

Second, these displays provide visitors with a foundational knowledge about the intimate connection among people of the African diaspora that will help them better understand 20th century manifestations of this relationship. The dynamic between African Americans and their African roots vary greatly depending on personal ideology and era. These ideas range from those of Booker T. Washington, who wrote that 'there was no hope of the American Negro's improving his condition by emigrating to Africa', to those of Marcus Garvey, who wished to 'build up Africa as a Negro Empire, where every black man…will have the opportunity to develop on his own lines under the protection of the most favorable democratic institutions.'[25] Since an understanding of this intricate relationship must be rooted in the historical connections between African Americans and West Africa, it is surprising that neither the ISM nor the NMAAHC introduce this topic in the African portion of the museum journey. While history museums do not tend to stray

[25] Washington, *Up From Slavery*, p. 139; Marcus Garvey, 'Africa for the Africans' (22 April 1922), *The Negro World*. Accessed in: Bob Blaisdell (ed.), *Selected Writings and Speeches of Marcus Garvey* (Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc., 2004), 69-73 (p. 72). In fact, Garvey's editorial 'Africa for the Africans' refers to arguments by black intellectuals like Washington and Du Bois, both of which had suggested that African Americans should not return to Africa (curiously, of course, Du Bois did move to Ghana in 1961 until his death two years later). Garvey lamented: 'One editor and leader [referring to Du Bois] went so far as to say…that American Negroes could not live in Africa, because the climate was too hot. All kinds of arguments have been adduced by these Negro intellectuals against the colonization of Africa by the black race….The old-time stories of "African fever," "African bad climate," "African mosquitoes," "African savages," have been repeated by these "brainless intellectuals" of ours as a scare against our people in America and the West Indies taking a kindly interest in the new program of building a racial empire of our own in our Motherland.' In turn, Du Bois published several criticisms of Garvey's approach in *The Crisis*, demonstrating the multiplicity of black attitudes toward Africa. See: Garvey, 'Africa for the Africans', p. 70.

from a chronological layout, drawing visitors' attention to recurring themes within black history would benefit their understanding of history's thematic arcs.

Finally, the international dynamic of these displays introduces the museological method of internationalization, allowing visitors to connect this approach to the inherently international history of the Atlantic world. Though internationalization can be used in any history museum it is particularly appropriate in black history museums, which tend to center on the African diaspora. The NMAAHC generally avoids an internationalized narrative, opting instead for a national focus through a collection of local histories from around the nation. The ISM, on the other hand, engages heavily with internationalization; in fact, the museum's blending of local and international histories is one of the institution's distinguishing characteristics. Black history museums like the ISM that engage extensively with internationalization create strong narratives that educate visitors about the intimate relationship between people of the African diaspora—a narrative that is best understood when first introduced in West African history displays.

CONCLUSION

An authentic representation of West African history in black history museums is important for several reasons. Among other benefits, these displays contextualize the African-American historical narrative, challenge western ideas of 'civilized' societies by highlighting cultures and accomplishments, counter the idea of Africans as a homogenous group, and introduce themes of internationalization that will help visitors understand subsequent historical periods, displays, and museological methods. To fully reach this potential, museums may improve displays by including the rationale behind the decisions to incorporate or omit certain aspects of the historical narratives. The curatorial process is conducted behind closed doors—often for good reason—but locking visitors out of the

process altogether may result in a failure to convey the importance of these displays.[26] A few placards explaining *why* it is important to demonstrate the civilized advancements of West Africans or the non-homogenous nature of the region may help visitors gain a more comprehensive understanding of the period and its museological representations.[27] This window into the curatorial process—accompanied by the embracing of complexity and nuances, the rejection of binary narratives, and the prioritization of authenticity over accuracy—can produce powerful images of a region that would soon be ripped apart by the transatlantic slave trade.

[26] As Charles Suamarez Smith writes: 'One of the things that is uncomfortable about the way a state-run museum operates is that it maintains a belief in anonymous authority. Instead of viewing the display of a gallery for what it is, a set of complex decisions about a number of alternative methods of representation, there is an idea that the procedure must be suppressed: labels, for example, tend to state straightforward information which pertains only to the artefacts on its own, not to its place in the gallery; visitors are not encouraged to view the gallery as an arbitrary construction;…and the design of galleries is thought to be a problem independent of the way that artefacts are viewed and understood by visitors, whereas, of course, the environment conditions and codifies the visitor's expectations.' See: Charles Suamarez Smith, 'Museums, Artefacts, and Meanings'. In Peter Vergo (ed.), *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion Books, 1989), 6-21 (p. 17).

[27] The benefits of encouraging visitors to actively interact with curatorial opinions were demonstrated in the *Trade and Empire* exhibition in the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester, England. Curators were split on whether or not 19th century slave figurines should be displayed, but ultimately decided to show them in order to initiate debates. Instead of withholding curatorial dissent from the public, the debate was incorporated into the display itself. Alan Rice explains: 'Eventually, the very debate about the objects was used to enhance this section of the exhibition, adding labels that showed the discussion among the curators and comments from a critic of the interpretation of the objects. By doing this the curators hoped to show the open-endedness of the exhibition and the way that even their perceptions can be dialogised both internally and externally, creating a debate rather than closing it by seemingly authoritative and all-encompassing interpretations.' This example demonstrates the way that curatorial (and even visitor) debates can be incorporated into museum displays, and in doing so has the ability to enhance the display, represent multiple interpretations of the same item, and spark debate among and between curators and visitors. See: Rice, 'Museums, Memorials and Plantation Houses in the Black Atlantic', p. 245.

THE SLAVE TRADE

INTRODUCTION

Despite the merits of rooting the African-American historical narrative in West Africa, the story often begins on the Atlantic Ocean during the transatlantic slave trade. Marking the transition from freedom to enslavement, the slave trade is arguably the most horrific aspect of the slavery era and, as such, its representation in museum displays receives significant attention from visitors. Due to importance of these displays, it is important that they prioritize authenticity over accuracy while also striking a balance between violence and agency. This section will examine the ways that the ISM, NMAAHC, and DuSable represent the slave trade, and will use these analyses to consider the effectiveness of these displays. The primary goals of slave trade representation—authenticity, inclusivity, and rehumanization—will serve as guiding measurements for these assessments.

HUMANIZING LARGE NUMBERS

During the years of the transatlantic slave trade, historians estimate that 12.5 million enslaved Africans were transported to the Americas.[28] Out of those transported, 10.7 million survived the journey while approximately 1.8 million died en route from disease, abuse, or suicide.[29] While these figures are striking, such large numbers pose a challenge for historians and museum professionals alike: At some point in representing mass tragedies, the large numbers involved undergo an emotional disconnection process during which human lives are reduced to data. Thus, when creating museum displays curators face

[28] See: 'Estimates', *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* <http://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates> [accessed on 7 October 2018].

[29] Ibid. These figures can be accessed by clicking first on the 'Only embarked' option (the total is 12,521,337 as of October 2018) and then clicking on the 'Only disembarked' option (the total is 10,702,657 as of October 2018). This means that while roughly 12.5 million Africans embarked ships in West Africa, only about 10.7 million disembarked in the Americas. We can then deduce that the difference between these figures—about 1.8 million—died en route.

the challenge of choosing approaches that humanize large quantities, ensuring that each individual African is not lost amid a sea of figures and statistics.

Though the ISM and the DuSable humanize enslaved Africans, it is the NMAAHC that combines the rehumanization process with the breakdown of large numbers associated with the transatlantic slave trade—a difficult task that requires the careful melding of emotion and figure utilization. In *Slavery and Freedom* a large wall is divided by country, with one section devoted to each nation that participated in the slave trade. The center of each section provides information about that nation's participation in the slave trade, and surrounding this information up and down the entire wall are lines of writing. Each line details a voyage and identifies the ship's name, its originating country, the voyage's starting date, and most powerfully, a number like '120/90'. These numbers depict how many enslaved Africans boarded the ship and how many survived the journey—an extraordinarily effective approach for portraying the high mortality rates of the slave trade.[30]

[30] The clarity and starkness of the information on this wall is reminiscent of the 'Captured Africans' sculpture in Lancaster, England. Alan Rice explains: 'As [Keven Dalton Johnson, the sculptor] himself says, the pedagogical aspect of the memorial is very important: "[T]he reason why the ships' names are there, and the actual numbers of slaves that were on those ships. They're very clear, and they're not abstracted in the way that other parts have been." Additionally, the names of the ships' captains are listed in all their Anglo-Saxon banality. Many of them are traditional Lancashire or more widely British surnames which they might well share with their local and tourist viewers. The sculpture does not resist such uncomfortable realities; in fact, it foregrounds them to make them part of the public memory so that white Lancastrians and Britons have to acknowledge these atrocities and hopefully learn from them before moving on.' See: Rice, 'Museums, Memorials and Plantation Houses in the Black Atlantic', pp. 239-240.

Slave trade wall, NMAAHC

While standing in this portion of the museum journey, a chorus of whispers and gasps are heard in the crowd. For some visitors, it is possible that they had never realized quite *how* deadly the slave trade had been. So much focus is given to the horrible conditions on board during these journeys that it is possible to overlook deaths by suicide or disease, following a wider trend for historical narratives to emphasize the spectacular over the mundane. Museum critic Wesley Morris describes this display:

> *The wall appears to be a single structure, full of information that you have to both crouch and get on the tips of your toes to make out. Then you realize that it runs the length of much of one side of the gallery, and that the decorative presentation has fooled then floored you. It's such a horrifyingly casual display that it becomes grimly amusing before it turns devastating.*[31]

As previously mentioned, when dealing with such large numbers sometimes the human element can be extracted from a tragic event. Just as museums have to deal with this issue

[31] Wesley Morris, 'Visiting the African-American Museum: Waiting, Reading, Thinking, Connecting Feeling', *The New York Times* (25 December 2016) <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/25/arts/design/smithsonian-museum-african-american-museum-history-culture-wesley-morris.html?_r=0> [accessed on 20 October 2018].

when representing events like the Holocaust, wars, or genocides, the large quantities involved in the slave trade should be humanized in its museological representation. Museums can re-humanize the large numbers of people involved in Middle Passage through these types of displays, reminding visitors about the human element of statistics. The particular method of humanizing large quantities of the slave trade (as opposed to humanizing the enslaved more broadly) could be further incorporated into displays in the ISM and DuSable in order to help visitors combine elements of quantity and humanity.

Though the ISM and DuSable do not humanize large quantities of the slave trade, they do succeed in inserting empathy and agency in their slave trade displays in order to humanize the enslaved. The ISM achieves this most effectively when displays encourage visitors to consider the era through the eyes of those who experienced it. Through quotations, audio displays, and annotations, visitors will hear the words of those who experienced the slave trade—a process that humanizes the history being represented. The DuSable does not utilize this individualized narration, but there is one display in particular that encourages visitors to reflect on the human element of the slave trade. Against a wall-sized image of Africans sitting aboard a slave ship, a glass case holds 19th century manillas.[32] The juxtaposition approach used here is particularly powerful. The backdrop brings visitors face to face with dozens of enslaved Africans—some looking anxious, others devastated, some contemplative. The three manillas—which, as the placard states, 'became synonymous with buying and selling slaves'—demonstrate the direct exchange that was central to the slave trade: human beings in exchange for basic commodities. This type of juxtaposition can cause visitors to think: 'How many manillas were worth one human life?'—a powerful and sobering thought.

[32] Manillas were a form of West African currency that were eventually produced in Europe to trade with African slavers.

Slave trade wall, DuSable Museum

These examples humanize enslaved Africans, encouraging visitors to emotionally reconnect with the slave trade narrative. The ISM connects visitors with the enslaved by telling stories through the latter's perspective. By making this dialogue direct and intimate, visitors connect with the enslaved in a personal way, which ultimately makes the rest of the gallery's displays even more powerful. The DuSable uses a simple wall display to emphasize the humanity of the enslaved, and the juxtaposition between image and artifact is effectively executed. While the human element of the slave trade can sometimes be forgotten, the visual experience of comparing the Africans in the drawing with the inanimate item that their lives were traded for refocuses the narrative. The NMAAHC, however, take the humanizing element a step further, applying the process not just to the enslaved but to the slave trade in its entirety. The slave trade wall breaks down large numbers into more digestible figures. Visitors, then, confront more fathomable numbers of human lives that boarded, survived, and succumbed to each ship on the Middle Passage.

REPRESENTING BRUTALITY AUTHENTICALLY

Trying to represent the extent and severity of the transatlantic slave trade is a difficult task for museums. The physical and mental anguish inflicted on Africans who were ripped from their homeland, crammed onto ships, and forced into a life of enslavement is a hard thing to convey to the public—particularly in a space that may need to remain somewhat child-friendly. Sometimes the emphases on brutality, trauma, and dehumanization is placed not just on the slave trade itself, but on the enslavement process within Africa. Both the ISM and the NMAAHC include displays explaining this process, and both narratives benefit from the inclusion. Each institution details the process of enslavement, using artifacts of restraint (a yoke at the ISM; a collar and ankle shackles at the NMAAHC) to trace the journey from capture to the ports—marching to the coast, sometimes from hundreds of miles inland. These displays educate visitors about topics like kidnapping, the barracoons, appraisals, transportation to slave ships, and seasoning, providing information about a topic that is sometimes glossed over in museums and historical narratives. Each museum's engagement with African enslavement is powerful; however, the ISM devotes more space to this topic, whereas the NMAAHC veers off into an exploration of European nations' build up to the slave trade.

The ISM and DuSable both consider the brutality of the Middle Passage through the lens of slave ships.[33] The ISM achieves this most strikingly in the Middle Passage Immersive, a dark enclosed room in the middle of *Enslavement and the Middle Passage* in which a two-minute rolling video recreates the most horrific aspects of the journey, accompanied by sights and sounds that will likely stir emotion. The video is graphic, with brutal conditions taking a clear toll on the enslaved Africans, many of whom seem to be straddling the fragile line between life and death. The DuSable also represents ship life by beginning 'Freedom and Resistance' in a physical and aesthetic manner as visitors walk

[33] The NMAAHC does use a slave ship as a lens through which to examine the slave trade—an approach that will be explained later in this section—but it does not do so to convey the specific theme of brutality.

through a wooden pathway, which represents a portion of a slave ship.[34] Walking through the path, there are unsettling, enlarged images on the walls, along with a display on devices used to restrain and punish.[35] Though it is not as graphic as the ISM's Middle Passage Immersive, the DuSable's display also confronts visitors with the grim reality of the slave trade.

The ship-like entrance of 'Freedom and Resistance', DuSable Museum

Both of these methods are effective in representing the brutality of the transatlantic slave trade through the perspective of the ships themselves. The ISM's Middle Passage Immersive addresses this topic unapologetically and this confident approach results in one of the museum journey's most powerful moments. Because of its graphic nature, some choose to avoid the display; however, the shocking nature of the video is also what makes the interactive experience so impactful. As a guide reminds a tour group, this video does not help us understand what enslaved Africans actually experienced—after all, we had a choice to leave or to avoid the video altogether—but it does provide a glimpse into a world

[34] This thesis stylistically differentiates between galleries and exhibits by using italics for the former and inverted commas for the latter. While the BCRI, NMAAHC, and ISM use a gallery layout, the DuSable is the only museum in this study to divide its layout into exhibits instead.

[35] These images include Africans lying down on layered boards with little more than a few inches between a body and the plank above, newly enslaved Africans walking in a line to go below deck, their hands and feet shackled with slave traders looking on, and Africans sitting in cramped, somber conditions during the journey.

that we would otherwise have to imagine. The DuSable's ship-like entryway to 'Freedom and Resistance' is subtler, but its appearance stands apart from the rest of the gallery and encourages a moment of reflection. Its strongest quality is perhaps not the aesthetic itself, but the combination of this entrance with the images and artifacts. These three aspects merge to create a single moment of entry into the gallery and marks the intellectual and emotional transition that the visitor will experience while exploring the African-American historical narrative.

Finally, museums engage with slave trade brutality through the lenses of resistance and retribution. When executed most effectively, these two elements are complementarily presented to balance the narrative between agency and violence. The ISM and DuSable both consider the slave trade within this framework. The ISM strikes a balanced narrative by presenting information about slave revolts and abuse. Visitors read extensively about uprisings through a blocked timeline, but they will do so after reflecting on several artifact-based displays that demonstrate the abuses of slavery.[36] These two elements are also present in the DuSable's 'Freedom and Resistance'; however, whereas some of the ISM's displays tend to focus more on slavery, the DuSable emphasizes the slave trade specifically. After visitors walk through the initial aesthetic slave ship display, a striking statue shows four young Mende children dressed in ragged clothing. The *Children of the Amistad* statue is accompanied by an annotation informing visitors about the uprising.[37]

[36] These two elements of the ISM will be further examined in the next section of this chapter.

[37] The *Amistad* rebellion occurred in 1839 when 53 enslaved Africans revolted on the second leg of their transport. The rebels killed most of the crew and spent 63 days at sea trying to navigate back to Africa, but two surviving slave owners (Don Jose Ruiz and Don Pedro Montez) eventually led the ship to Long Island. The enslaved Africans were initially charged with piracy and murder. The circuit court case ruled on behalf of the Africans, a decision contested by the United States attorney who argued that the country's treaty to Spain obliged them to return the Africans to Spain. The case went to the Supreme Court and former president John Quincy Adams personally took on the case and helped the Africans win their freedom. Ultimately, they were returned to Africa on the *Gentleman* as free men. For more on the *Amistad*, see for example: Howard Jones, *Mutiny on the Amistad: The Saga of a Slave Revolt and Its Impact on American Abolition, Law, and Diplomacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Marcus Rediker, *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013).

Immediately after visitors reflect on this statue they are faced with items of retribution—a powerful contrast that creates a well-balanced narrative.

Both of these displays are important aspects of the museums' slave trade narratives. The ISM's focus on rebellion and retribution simultaneously complements and juxtaposes *Life in West Africa*. Minutes after learning about the depth and richness of various African cultures prior to the transatlantic slave trade, visitors learn the details of capture and transport. In other words, visitors had just begun to learn about West Africans as individuals outside of the slave trade framework—their pre-slavery collective identities. Observing the painful and sudden transition from freedom to enslavement is an emotional journey, but one that is central in understanding the inhumane nature of the slave trade. Likewise, the DuSable uses these displays to introduce the museum's primary gallery. By doing so, curators have immediately established a narrative focusing on agency and violence—two intermingling themes that remain important throughout African-American history. Though the *Children of the Amistad* display may have been a missed opportunity to talk about the abolitionist work of John Quincy Adams (leading to broader conversations about abolitionism that were missing from this exhibition), by highlighting the success of the uprising and its role as a catalyst in anti-slavery ideology, the DuSable emphasizes the resistance and agency of Africans during the Middle Passage and beyond.

In the representation of slave trade brutality, there is a risk that the physical and more sensational aspects of the period may dominate the narrative. The psychological and emotional impact of the slave trade is difficult to convey in a museum display; for example, there is no way for a museum to truly convey the horror inherent to historian Edward Reynolds' description of newly-enslaved Africans:

> *Most Africans understandably showed extreme levels of distress and despair at being torn away from their homeland…Some feared that they were being taken*

> *away to be eaten by their captors; the attempts by some slavers to explain to the victims the purpose for which they had been purchased failed to allay their fears.*[38]

The emotional effects of the slave trade do not translate as well to museum settings—which lend themselves better to physical, more tangible histories, such as punishment and violence—and because of this, slave trade brutality in this study often focuses on physical, more sensational elements (like violence or packing) than on the emotional, more mundane elements of the narrative (like fear or disease).[39] As such, and because the slave trade is inherently dramatic, curators are tasked with balancing the unusual cruelty of this inhumane period with the more mundane aspects of the Middle Passage that—though they are more difficult to recreate in museums—are key to authentically representing the transatlantic slave trade.

REDISCOVERING FORGOTTEN STORIES

While it is important to convey the physical and emotional trauma experienced by enslaved Africans during the Middle Passage, there are other aspects within the triangular trade that are often overlooked, such as the precolonial Americas, the economic aspects of the transatlantic slave trade, and individual ships and journeys. This is partially a result of the tendency to focus on the most dramatic elements of a historical period, neglecting the ordinary or marginal detail. The ISM and the NMAAHC both examine the people of the precolonial Americas and the Europeans who disrupted their lives when slavery began to dominate the Atlantic world. The ISM devotes the first large display in *Enslavement and Middle Passage* to the precolonial Americas—the only museum in this study to do so—

[38] Edward Reynolds, 'Human Cargoes: Enslavement and the Middle Passage'. In Anthony Tibbles (ed.), *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity* (Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool, 2005), 25-30 (p. 26).
[39] In contrast, in the 1960s Stanley Elkins argued that the psychological harm of slavery was more damaging than the physical hardships; since this point, much of the slavery historiography has focused more on psychological and mental impacts than physical punishments.

and the roots of slavery in this region.[40] The display is centered on artifacts including jewellery, figurines, manillas, cowrie shells, textiles, and trade beads, and the narrative emphasizes the cultures and advancements of these precolonial communities. While the ISM focuses on the precolonial Americas, the NMAAHC examines European nations in the years leading up to and during the slave trade. The primary focuses of these displays are Portugal, England, France, the Netherlands, and Spain, highlighting their paths to global trade. These displays consider the slave trade through an alternative lens—European exploration of the Americas—and encourage visitors to consider Atlantic history as one continuous interconnected timeline of events rather than as fragmented segments.

These considerations of the making of the Atlantic world—whether through the ISM lens of the natives or the NMAAHC lens of the Europeans—contextualizes the slave trade, enabling visitors to more comprehensively understand the period.[41] The ISM displays apply the same approach to natives of the Americas that they apply to West Africans in *Life in West Africa*—an emphasis on cultural advancements and local societies that are irreparably damaged by the slave trade. This shines a spotlight on indigenous Americans, reminding visitors that the effects of slavery transcended black and white people. By contrast, the NMAAHC creates an arc of the European role in Atlantic history, examining the four phases of the era: the European exploration of the Americas; the path to global trade for each European nation; each nation's participation in the slave trade; and the economic benefits from this participation. This fleshed-out narrative—underpinned by the focus on each nation instead of considering them as a single group—cultivates understanding of the economic framework that fuelled the slave trade for centuries. The approaches at both the ISM and the NMAAHC, then, increase the quality of the slave trade

[40] While the NMAAHC examines European explorations of the Americas, only the ISM significantly engages with the native people and their histories and cultures.
[41] Ideally, both topics would appear in the same gallery as they each provide visitors with distinct and complementary information.

narrative by broadening the scope to include narratives that often get lost in the peripheries of historical consideration.

While these displays help to represent other groups involved in the making of the Atlantic world, some museums also teach visitors about the economics of the slave trade.[42] At the ISM, this is largely achieved on a large screen with a map of the Atlantic world that provides information about each century of the transatlantic slave trade from the 16th to the 19th century.[43] This display is complemented by two smaller touch screens where visitors can read more about individual slave voyages, the primary countries and ports involved, and the numbers of enslaved Africans captured and transported. The DuSable similarly engages with the economics of the slave trade, and perhaps the most poignant economics display is the juxtaposition between Africans and manillas (detailed on pages 169). This theme is most overtly examined in a video guiding visitors through centuries of the transatlantic slave trade, presented near *The Political State of Great Britain for the Month of January*.[44] The NMAAHC, by contrast, examines slave trade economics through the lens of Atlantic development, focusing on the ways that Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, France, Great Britain, and the United States profited from the period.[45]

The Middle Passage often receives significant attention in slave trade displays, but the economics of the Triangular Trade—admittedly more mundane though equally as important—is sometimes neglected in this process. As the Middle Passage was just a

[42] For more information about the economics of the slave trade and slavery, see for example: Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965); Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974); Herbert G. Gutman, *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of* Time on the Cross (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).
[43] For an insightful analysis on the benefits and limitations of different slave trade models (the visual demonstration of the transatlantic slave trade, as presented in the ISM's triangular trade exhibit), see: John G. Beech, 'The Marketing of Slavery Heritage in the United Kingdom', *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism* 2.3-4 (2001), 85-106 (pp. 90-94).
[44] *The Political State of Great Britain for the Month of January* is a 1734 book containing profits gained by the Royal African Company.
[45] The particular focus in this display is The Royal African Company, the Dutch West India Company, the Coat of Arms of the South Sea Company, and the Cadiz Slave Company.

portion of the entire journey, broadening visitors' understanding of the transatlantic trade helps them comprehend the wider context of the slave trade. This alleviates the hyper-focus on the Middle Passage and provides an opportunity for visitors to engage with the other two legs of the journey, as well as the financing that motivated the slave trade more broadly. Displays at the ISM, DuSable, and NMAAHC address the commodification of Africans and, by doing so, add more dimension to their slave trade narratives. The ISM's display aesthetically and intellectually attracts the attention of visitors who seem to be eager to learn about the economics of the Triangular Trade—and, within a localized narrative, about the money that built the city surrounding them. DuSable's display, though briefer, succeeds in incorporating economics into the gallery while demonstrating the motivating nature of money. Finally, the NMAAHC takes a completely different approach by breaking the economics of the slave trade down by participating nation, encouraging visitors to consider the role of the slave trade in each nation's historical development.

In addition to an economic focus, the slave trade can also be viewed through different lenses. One particularly effective method is to consider the slave trade through the lens of ships and journeys. The ISM, utilizing its location in Liverpool's docks area, encourages visitors to engage with the slave trade through the evaluation of ship journeys, many of which departed from nearby docks. Various displays featuring ship documents, maps, and touch screens teach visitors about the slave trade through the lens of these voyages, and its localized perspective further complements this information. The nautical emphasis of the ISM's *Enslavement and the Middle Passage* is also apparent in the NMAAHC, though the latter focuses more on the ship itself. In addition to annotations detailing topics like ship packing and seasoning, the centerpiece of the NMAAHC's nautical narrative is positioned in a side room where visitors can see pieces of the *São José*, a slave ship that crashed in

1794 and is in the process of being recovered by the Slave Wrecks Project. In the center of this room lies timber and an iron ballast from the salvaged ship.[46]

The focus on ships and individual journeys in the ISM and NMAAHC bring a refreshing element to slave trade representation. While the focus on these aspects of the era should not divert attention away from enslaved Africans, it is interesting that both museums use their institutional locations and connections to create a ship-focused narrative. The ISM incorporates its location and maritime history—an approach that takes ownership of the city's dark history, complements the downstairs Maritime Museum, and produces a lasting experience for visitors who will exit the museum onto the docks. Moreover, the ship lens is peppered throughout the museum journey and challenges visitors to reconsider this era in new ways—resulting, of course, in alternative perspectives and conclusions.[47] The NMAAHC, on the other hand, uses its role in the Slave Wrecks Project to create a centerpiece display that accentuates nearby displays on the Middle Passage and commands the attention of the room. This display adds a unique element to the narrative, enabling visitors to learn about enslaved conditions in the presence of the pieces of a slave ship—a strong backdrop that cements the images, annotations, and artifacts on display in this gallery. Both examples of engagement with ships demonstrate

[46] These pieces are only on temporary loan to the NMAAHC, but the museum's leadership role in the Slave Wrecks Project may result in a similar permanent display in coming years.

[47] In a 2001 review of the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery (the ISM's predecessor), John G. Beech argues that 'maritimization' of slavery in displays: (1) 'effectively defines slavery as essentially the slave *trade*, and thus locates it firmly in the past, something temporally distant which has only limited applications for present-day Britain'; (2) 'defines slavery as a *maritime* activity. Arguably, such accentuation is as insensitive as it is misleading. It is hard to imagine that any German recognition of the Holocaust would be placed in a railway museum simply on the basis that trains were used to transport victims to the concentration camps. "Maritimization" results in the defining of the slave trade as a subset of transport and is thus a process which places slavery in the mobile context of white heritage. Slavery is not statically defined from any kind of black perspective.' These points illustrate the reasons why the ISM is grounded in a more historically and culturally comprehensive framework than its predecessor. These criticisms do not hold true against the current museum, which, through extensive engagement with topics like West African history and culture, the economic impact of slavery, the legacy of slavery, and 20th century black history, ensures that the narrative is framed within black perspectives. See: Beech, 'The Marketing of Slavery Heritage in the United Kingdom', pp. 103-104.

the importance of alternative lenses, and the means of achieving these narratives serves as a reminder about the importance of location and institutional networking.

CRAFTING LOCALIZING NARRATIVES

This thesis often deals with the approaches of localization and internationalization, as well as how these methods are impacted by the institution's location or the material that is being represented. In the representations of the slave trade, the ISM utilizes its location on the docks of Liverpool to craft an inimitable tone to the museum journey that could only be effectively executed in a city like Liverpool—the city from which thousands of slave voyages commenced their journeys. This method also depends on the localization of displays—a theme that is prominent throughout two of the three galleries in the ISM. Mentioned at various points in the museum journey are Liverpool, St Helens, Lancaster, and the Isle of Man.

Liverpool street name display, ISM

This localization has been incredibly well received by visitors who write: 'Though a worldwide phenomenon with a history as long as human conquest, it took until the 21st century for a city to be brave and caring enough to confront [s]lavery and to admit that [its] fortunes were built on the misery and exploitation of millions.'; 'Especially interesting were the role[s] of Liverpool and its citizens in the trade; this museum was uniquely qualified to present [this information] and the presentation was especially instructive.'; 'This account…includes an honest admission from the city of Liverpool of its part in the barbaric practice.'[48] By localizing some aspects of these displays, the museum faces a difficult and sensitive local history head on. Subsequent information about how the city benefited from the slave trade in its time and beyond, as well as creative approaches (like the placement of a window in a space that frames the docks, accompanied by information about how the waterfront has changed since its slave trading days) help to claim ownership of the city's past—a significant message that, until the museum's opening in 2007, had been largely unacknowledged in Britain's public spaces.

This should serve as a reminder, then, that an institution's location can significantly impact its narrative, and that proper utilization of the surrounding landscape can add a unique element to the museum. In this case, it is the ISM's placement on the Liverpool docks that allows the institution to craft a narrative that cannot be replicated in the museums of Chicago or Washington, D.C. This ensures that, as long as the institution continues to utilize its location, the ISM will produce unique narratives that stand out among the other black history museums throughout the Atlantic region.

[48] *TripAdvisor* (23 June 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g186337-d1138078-r495457113-International_Slavery_Museum-Liverpool_Merseyside_England.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 20 September 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (28 July 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g186337-d1138078-r506405085-International_Slavery_Museum-Liverpool_Merseyside_England.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 20 September 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (13 July 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g186337-d1138078-r501727519-International_Slavery_Museum-Liverpool_Merseyside_England.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 20 September 2017].

CREATING INTENTIONAL ATMOSPHERES

Displays are the primary component of museum narratives, but curators can work with other areas of the building to accentuate these narratives. By using lighting, space, sound, colors, or structural design, curators can cultivate specific ambiences that complement displays and contribute to the intended narrative of a gallery.[49] This approach can be particularly effective when dealing with sensitive histories like the slave trade, and it is utilized by the ISM and the NMAAHC. Color, sound, and lighting is used purposefully at the ISM, and it is clear that these components are carefully combined in each gallery to produce a specific atmosphere. Each of this museum's three galleries exudes a consciously-cultivated tone that complements its content and narrative. The juxtaposition between the two outer galleries (*Life in West Africa* and *Legacy*) and the inner gallery (*Enslavement and the Middle Passage*) is striking. In the latter, dark colors, dimmed lighting, and haunting sounds from the Middle Passage Immersive produce a space for somber reflection. In contrast, the brightly-colored, airy outer galleries feel more celebratory and empowering, with music and inspiring speeches by civil rights leaders filling the air. These details greatly contribute to the visitor experience and make the museum journey feel like an immersive sensory experience.

The NMAAHC also utilizes this approach in its slave trade representation. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the representation of the slave trade (and, subsequently, slavery) at the NMAAHC is not contained in a single display, but rather lies in the design and layout of the museum itself. Visitors enter the museum on ground level, but the six-story museum journey begins three floors below ground. As one visitor explains:

[49] For more on museum design, see for example: Polly McKenna-Cress and Janet Kamien, *Creating Exhibitions: Collaboration in the Planning, Development and Design of Innovative Experiences* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2013); Tessa Bridal, *Effective Exhibit Interpretation and Design* (New York: AltaMira Press, 2013); Nikos Bubaris, 'Sound in Museums—Museums in Sound', *Museum Management and Curatorship* 29.4 (2014), 391-402; Leslie Bedford, *The Art of Museum Exhibitions: How Story and Imagination Create Aesthetic Experiences* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2015); Philip Hughes, *Exhibition Design: An Introduction* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2015).

> *A huge glass elevator take a large group slowly down…and along the way you see certain dates on the wall and a guide tells you why these dates are important for the African American experience….We go down from 2008, the election of the first African American president, all the way to the beginning of the slave trade.*[50]

The bottom floor is dedicated to the examination of the slave trade and slavery—the depths of the African-American experience. Each floor is then connected through an inclining ramp; thus, each period of history is more highly-elevated than previous eras. *The Atlantic* writer Vann R. Newkirk II describes this layout as 'an effect similar to Dante's harrowing journey in *Inferno*, and the walk upwards through Reconstruction, Redemption, the civil-rights movement, and into the present day is a reminder of the constant push and pull of horror and protest.'[51]

The bottom and top floors are separated not just by height, but also by atmosphere. As *Washington Post* art and architecture critic Philip Kennicott writes: 'The tone, throughout, is a shifting mix of sadness and celebration.'[52] The bottom floor is located far beneath ground level with dim lighting and no windows, while the upper floor has windows strategically placed in various spaces, letting in a glow of natural light; much of the bottom floor is cramped and claustrophobic, while the upper floors get increasingly spacious; the bottom floor is quiet and solemn, and visitors seem to be reflecting on the country's original sin, while the uppermost floor is much lighter in tone and is accompanied by the sound of laughter, music, and clips from black television shows and movies.[53] By

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[50] *TripAdvisor* (6 May 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r482176500-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 8 July 2017].

[51] Vann R. Newkirk II, 'How a Museum Reckons With Black Pain', *The Atlantic* (23 September 2016) <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/09/national-museum-of-african-american-history-and-culture-smithsonian/501356/> [accessed on 10 January 2017].

[52] Philip Kennicott, 'The African American Museum tells powerful stories—but not as powerfully as it could', *Washington Post* (14 September 2016) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/the-african-american-museum-tells-powerful-stories--but-in-a-disjointed-way/2016/09/14/b7ba7e4c-7849-11e6-bd86-b7bbd53d2b5d_story.html?utm_term=.213c0ab3101d> [accessed on 3 August 2017].

[53] Though the claustrophobic design in the slave trade exhibit contributes to the atmosphere in a powerful way, it also creates a bottleneck effect that creates problematically large crowds in the earliest displays. Therefore, while this design is artistically interesting, it will work better if crowds start to thin out in coming years. In his NMAAHC review for *The New York Times*, Wesley Morris describes: 'In these early galleries,

separating the lower and upper levels through subtle features like sound, lighting, and atmosphere, the museum is teaching visitors far more about the slave trade and slavery than meets the eye.[54]

Both the ISM and the NMAAHC use non-display aspects of the museum journey to cultivate intentional atmospheres, which have the ability to invoke emotion, set the mood, or juxtapose various historical themes or eras. This approach is effective in each institution and, as visitor feedback confirms, is appreciated by visitors. While the two museums use the method of ambience in slightly different ways, it is worth noting that there are similarities between the two that suggest that the NMAAHC may have drawn inspiration from the ISM in its development period. Though curators from the NMAAHC have not publically stated that they modelled their atmospheric changes after those at the ISM, earlier visits to the ISM from NMAAHC executives indicate that this may have been the case.[55] Regardless, these subtle approaches demonstrate the importance of attention to detail in creating an engaging and captivating museum journey.

While this method elevates the slave trade representation in both the ISM and NMAAHC, it should be noted that history museums often succumb to an inauthentically upward trajectory, which presents older history as negative and more recent history as positive. While curators should emphasize the progress made in race relations throughout the history of the Atlantic world, adhering too strictly to this Whiggish narrative can under-acknowledge modern racial problems. This is more likely to occur at museums that represent the entire arc of African-American history (rather than a specific period)—with

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you're always in someone's way. There's always some image you're not seeing, some wall text you practically have to kiss in order to read.' See: Morris, 'Visiting the African-American Museum'.

[54] The correlation between underground displays and the intentional atmosphere of darkness and despair could be considered the museological version of the organic experience at sites like the Cape Coast Castle in Ghana. As Nathan K. Austin describes: '[T]he male slave dungeon at the site today remains very much as it was in the days of slavery. It is a damp and practically airless enclosure at the depths of the Castle structure with its dirt floor and a tiny window at the top of one of its high walls. As one descends deeper into the dungeon, the indignity of incarceration and the cruel existence of the slaves as they awaited shipment across the Atlantic become apparent.' See: Austin, 'Managing Heritage Attractions', p. 449.

[55] Personal conversation with ISM Director Richard Benjamin.

the slave trade and the modern world serving as the two ends of this linear narrative. As such, considering this issue requires asking two separate questions: 'How does this linear narrative impact visitor understanding of the slave trade?' and 'How does it impact visitor understanding of more recent racial issues?'

The second of these two questions will be addressed in the next chapter, but it is fitting to consider the first question within the specific context of slave trade representation. A.V. Seaton argues that slavery (or, more specifically, its abolition) can actually be a point of pride in American history:

> *[The realization that slavery is an undeniable fact] makes it a safer subject in the US, since it is a recognized landscape whose transformation can be positioned as part of progressive history, a source of pride for American citizens...In the official history of America the triumph over slavery and the evolution of a "land of the free" are central to the grand narrative of national development.*[56]

Considering this tendency toward progressivism in American memory—in which American progress is a linear trajectory from slavery to abolition—it becomes clear that this narrative may be replicated in museum narratives.[57]

Out of the two museums in this study that engage with this method and represent the slave trade, visitors respond to different aspects of these designs.[58] For the ISM's *Enslavement and the Middle Passage*, is it the atmosphere that attracts attention: 'Thought provoking and eerie atmosphere.'; '[T]he different photos and media tools create a special

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[56] Seaton, 'Sources of Slavery—Destinations of Slavery', p. 120.

[57] This tendency toward linear narratives in popular understandings of history is discussed by Wilton Corkern. Corkern writes: 'All too often in popular history, the present situation is portrayed as the near-perfect culmination of centuries of human endeavour. Missing is the improbability, the surprise, the controversy—in short the human dimension—of history.' Similarly, Frances Fitzgerald point to this progressive view of history when explaining America's disastrous participation in the Vietnam War: 'Americans ignore history….The national myth is that of creativity and progress, of a steady climbing upward into power and prosperity, both for the individual and for the country as a whole. Americans see history as a straight line and themselves standing at the cutting edge of it as representatives for all mankind.' See: Wilton Corkern, 'Heritage Tourism: Where Public and History Don't Always Meet', *American Studies International* 42.2/3 (2004), 7-16 (p. 11); Frances Fitzgerald, *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam* (New York: Vintage, 1973), p. 9.

[58] The BCRI engages with this method to some extent, but its timeline only allows for an arc between Jim Crow and 1965. This will be further discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

atmosphere and make the exhibition very interesting…'; 'The atmosphere inside is heavy, at least it felt that way for me.'[59] In these ways, visitors feel that their understanding of the slave trade was enhanced by the creative use of lighting, sound, and color in the ISM's slave trade gallery.

Visitors to the NMAAHC also claimed that their understanding of the slave trade benefited from non-display elements of the institution, though these comments tend to focus on the narrowness and darkness of *Slavery and Freedom*: 'The floor devoted to chronicling the brutalities of the slave trade had very narrow aisles. That only impressed on me that tribulations of being packed onto shelves in slave ships, unable to even sit up!'; '…The architecture/layout is subtle but incredibly effective…during the section in which the trans-atlantic slave trade is discussed, the space is smaller with a lower ceiling and feels more confined/restricted; when you emerge into the section post-Revolutionary war, the room opens up and you have more space and "freedom" to move around.'[60] The use of space and structural design, then, positively impacted visitor experience in the NMAAHC and helped to put visitors in a receptive and empathic frame of mind.

Clearly visitors to the ISM and NMAAHC appreciated these creative approaches and incorporated them into their learning processes. While atmosphere and structural design in black history museums can have the negative effect of whitewashing modern issues, they

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[59] *TripAdvisor* (22 September 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g186337-d1138078-r526667423-International_Slavery_Museum-Liverpool_Merseyside_England.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 7 October 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (15 December 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g186337-d1138078-r333207432-International_Slavery_Museum-Liverpool_Merseyside_England.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 3 July 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (13 September 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g186337-d1138078-r418214953-International_Slavery_Museum-Liverpool_Merseyside_England.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 3 December 2016].

[60] *TripAdvisor* (22 March 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r469444974-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 7 July 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (27 September 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r527809086-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 12 October 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (13 April 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r475373012-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 7 July 2017].

can also help express the darkness of the slave trade and slavery in ways that traditional displays cannot. In this way, visitors need to experience the depths of African-American history first—its sense of tragedy and sobering truths—in order to contextually and thoroughly understand the progress made throughout the history of the Atlantic world. Thus while inauthentic modern representation should be avoided, this is no reason to miss the opportunity to innovatively enhance displays representing the slave trade. In the cases of the ISM and NMAAHC, these approaches are unique in their ability to communicate the darkness and pain of the transatlantic slave trade.

CONCLUSION

The transatlantic slave trade is undoubtedly one of the most tragic chapters of the history of the Atlantic world. The emotional and physical toll of the transition from freedom to enslavement is hard to fully comprehend centuries later, when large numbers and the lapsing of time can soften collective memory. History museums purposefully and sensitively approach this period, and prioritizing authenticity, inclusiveness, and rehumanization helps to create more effective displays. In contrast, when accuracy (rather than authenticity) dominates a slave trade narrative, the narrative may be sensationalized and will fail to truly represent experiences of the slave trade. Similarly, the human element of the slave trade should be continuously stressed in these narratives to discourage visitors from losing sight of the human element in the midst of large numbers. Curators face significant challenges when crafting slave trade displays, but when done correctly these displays educate visitors about a shameful past while laying an intellectual foundation necessary to understanding the subsequent chapters of black experiences in the Atlantic world.

SLAVERY

INTRODUCTION

In the African-American historical narrative, the story of slavery is the foundation of all subsequent eras and, as such, it is important for curators to create displays that speak to that significance. Because the topic of slavery is so broad and dynamic, there are many ways for museums to authentically represent the period while maintaining museological innovation. Though institutions use various methods to produce unique narratives, the cornerstone of these displays often relies on the same objective: cultivating a narrative that blends the horrors of slavery with the agency of the enslaved. Additionally, a struggle between accuracy and authenticity on one hand and education and entertainment on the other can be problematic, and curators are faced with navigating these struggles to strike a balance between elements like diversity and homogeneity, ordinary and extraordinary, and local and foreign. While these considerations make crafting a slavery narrative challenging, when curators successfully meld these themes their displays evoke powerful emotions from visitors learning about the ways that masters and traders tried (and failed) to subdue the African-American spirit.

DEHUMANIZATION AND VIOLENCE

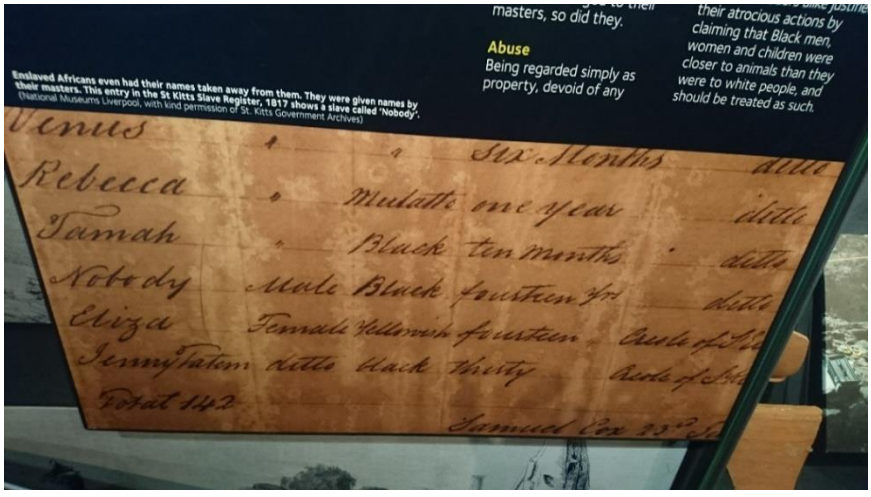
Through degradation, intimidation, threats, and abuse, masters hoped that they could break enslaved African Americans. While enslaved people resiliently persisted throughout this era, these techniques helped to shape and maintain the institution of slavery for centuries. Because dehumanization and violence are so central to the slavery narrative, museums heavily engage with them to convey the worst aspects of slavery. In this study the ISM, NMAAHC, and DuSable all examine dehumanization and violence and, while the overall narratives were unique to each institution, there were two noticeable approaches to these

topics—primary source engagement and artifact display. Though alternative or inverted methods are sometimes used in these representations, primary sources and artifacts are uniquely positioned to present these themes comprehensively and effectively; as such, these two methods warrant interpretative analysis in this section.

Museums frequently examine the dehumanization of slavery through primary source engagement, most often using advertisements to teach visitors about the domestic slave trade and the separation of families. This type of primary source engagement is common at the ISM, NMAAHC, and the DuSable, and all three institutions incorporate copies of slave auction announcements, slave sale advertisements, and runaway slave advertisements in their slavery displays. The advertisements are often displayed in their original format (generally either a facsimile document or a photograph of the original format), though museums can also engage with this material more creatively. For example, ISM visitors will engage with enlarged, cropped, and projected copies of these documents, which are placed strategically along the walls of *Enslavement and the Middle Passage*. The NMAAHC take a different approach to primary source engagement—in addition to displaying the traditional documents, slave advertisement extracts are also engraved on a wall. Eye-level engravings like 'A Negro boy named Peter about twelve years of age copper complexion and A SLAVE FOR LIFE, $1,000 (1857)' tell haunting individualized stories about America's domestic slave trade. Moreover, while the advertisements in these displays are often from places other than the museum's city, the use of local advertisements is particularly powerful. The ISM is the only museum in this study that localizes its narrative by including an advertisement from 1766 Liverpool—a method that, if possible to incorporate, would further strengthen the NMAAHC and DuSable narratives by connecting each institution's location to the histories they are representing.

In addition to advertisements, other primary sources can also reinforce the dehumanizing nature of slavery. While slave advertisements demonstrate the ways that

enslaved people were treated as livestock, items like slave registers and plantation journals can provide further insight into the slave-master dynamic. The ISM, NMAAHC, and DuSable use these primary sources in their slavery displays. Of these representations, one of the most powerful statements is communicated through a simple extract displayed at the ISM, where an enlarged cropped copy of an 1817 St Kitts slave register lists a slave named 'Nobody'. These types of displays are typical in the ISM narrative, which highlights the inextricable link between slavery, dehumanization, and loss of identity. The dehumanization of slaves is evident in a similar display in the DuSable's 'Freedom and Resistance', in which a plantation pocket journal provides insight into how planters tracked their slaves' ages and monetary values. The NMAAHC also uses a plantation document in *Slavery and Freedom*—an account book used to record the amount of cotton picked each day. In addition to demonstrating the dehumanizing nature of slave labor, this display connects work to violence by detailing the retribution awaiting slaves who did not meet a daily quota.



Slave register, ISM

The use of these primary sources brings some of the most abhorrent aspects of slavery to life. Whether these documents were used to announce a slave sale or to locate the whereabouts of a fugitive slave, they are incredibly powerful and their ability to convey

dehumanization is unrivalled by any other museological method. These representations are also particularly important because the emotional impact of slavery is often overshadowed by the institution's violence. Though these two elements are equally important, the physical effects of slavery are more easily visualized, whereas the emotional turmoil experienced by slaves is less tangible. In addition to tangibility, representing physical violence within slavery prioritizes the spectacular over the mundane to create narratives that entertain visitors by providing exciting narratives.

The alternative to this process—educating visitors through authentic narratives—is more difficult to achieve, which is why less quantifiable, tangible, and spectacular historical themes (like dehumanization) can sometimes be overlooked in museums. Curators can navigate this challenge by using creative displays to educate visitors about the invisible scars of slavery. Encouraging visitors to confront slavery's dehumanization through primary source engagement is an effective way of achieving this and, as such, it is fitting that this approach is utilized by all the museums in this study that engage with slavery.

Just as curators engage with primary sources to represent dehumanization, artifact display is utilized to examine violence. The NMAAHC relies more on images to teach visitors about this topic, but both the ISM and DuSable center slave violence on the items used to inflict that abuse. The artifacts used to convey violence are often similar; for example, the ISM and DuSable display shackles, a punishment collar, a yoke, and a branding iron. The ISM's more extensive collection also includes a hand whip, a muzzle, and two sets of coffles, though many of these items are included as images in the DuSable. The NMAAHC also displays some of these artifacts—a field whip and shackles are displayed in *Slavery and Freedom*—but they are blended into other displays rather than used as one central display focusing on violence. Though the ISM and DuSable's method of concentrating these items into a single conversation allows these narratives to explore

violence independently, the NMAAHC's blending method more subtly incorporates this theme into the gallery's other displays.

Items used to restrain and punish, ISM

While it may be argued that the focus on violent artifacts at the ISM and DuSable emphasizes the most dramatic aspects of slavery in order to entertain visitors (thereby favoring accuracy over authenticity), this method also encourages a thoughtful pause along the museum journey. The use of artifact display may seem straightforward, but closer analysis reveals a harrowing transformation of the items' purposes. Originally, the intent of these devices was to subdue, to inflict pain, to silence, and to warn others against whichever acts triggered the punishment. They sent a message to enslaved people about power, cementing the existing racial hierarchy and ensuring that it was upheld. After this period ended, however, these items were used for a different purpose. Suddenly they did not represent threats of violence and suppression, but rather offered themselves as tools for learning and understanding. Perhaps most importantly, they were symbols of resistance, signifying all the defiant ways that enslaved people chose to subvert racial power—resulting in torture and punishment in the short term, but inching toward collective agency and freedom over time.

The devices also rebut the contemporary argument that slavery was a benevolent system with few examples of abuse. This process could be improved by juxtaposing the actual treatment of slaves (as represented in these displays on dehumanization, loss of identity, and violence) with proslavery myths about slavery 'civilizing' Africans and African Americans. If curators compare these two elements more overtly, they would encourage visitors to make the connection between the myths and realities of slavery. Despite this opportunity for increased engagement with these items, their current representations in are powerful. The process of museological display transformed these pieces from devices used to punish and maintain submission, to artifacts used to educate, empower, caution, and heal. That transformation in itself is a powerful one that should not be overlooked by academics, curators, or museum visitors. As such, the use of artifacts is an effective way of presenting the darkest aspects of slavery.

Visitors to the DuSable and NMAAHC do not mention these items in their reviews of the museums, but the artifacts are frequently mentioned in ISM's online feedback, with visitors writing: 'I must admit I was shocked and horrified to see how slaves used to be treated. [Y]ou would not believe it unless you saw the instruments of torture that were used.'; 'It takes a relatively "insignificant" artefact to bring home this inhumanity, sometimes.'; 'Standing face to face with the shackles and the tools used to punish our ancestors was extremely overwhelming…'[61] As these reviews demonstrate, sometimes artifacts can convey stories and emotions that cannot be achieved through other approaches. Though visitors are likely familiar with the violence experienced by enslaved

[61] *TripAdvisor* (1 September 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g186337-d1138078-r520152676-International_Slavery_Museum-Liverpool_Merseyside_England.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 7 October 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (2 August 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g186337-d1138078-r508058977-International_Slavery_Museum-Liverpool_Merseyside_England.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 20 September 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (17 November 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g186337-d1138078-r438109939-International_Slavery_Museum-Liverpool_Merseyside_England.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 3 December 2016].

people, seeing these objects allows them to better visualize their use and creates an empathetic link between 21st century museum visitors and antebellum slaves.

To complement these displays on violence, the ISM, NMAAHC, and the DuSable also utilize imagery in their displays. The slavery displays in all three institutions are dotted with engravings of punishment, abuse, and forced submission. Among the contemporary engravings at the ISM's *Enslavement and the Middle Passage* are depictions of Africans being overworked and whipped, as well as sketches demonstrating the use of punishment stocks, iron face masks, spurs, and restrictive collars. These types of images also frequent the NMAAHC's *Slavery and Freedom*, where visitors see a fugitive getting attacked by dogs, a black man getting whipped, a white man whipping a black woman with a baby on her back, and a scene from the Margaret Garner incident.[62] This method is also used in the DuSable, but the images are used only to provide a visual accompaniment to the retribution artifacts. These images show the artifacts in use, inserting a sobering tone into the narrative. In each of these cases, narratives at the ISM, NMAAHC, and DuSable benefit from the use of imagery—an approach that reinforces and enhances the messages in surrounding displays; however, this approach is most effective when narratives are balanced between the ordinary and the extreme. To achieve this balance, images focusing on violence should be balanced by other displays demonstrating the emotional impact of slavery in order to provide visitors with an authentic understanding of the period.

While museums frequently use primary source engagement to represent dehumanization and artifact display to represent violence, some museums invert these

[62] Margaret Garner (b. 1834; d. 1858) and her four children were in the process of using the Underground Railroad to escape enslavement when her former master and federal marshals stormed into their safe house in Cincinnati to force the family to return to Kentucky. Knowing the fate that awaited her family, Garner planned to kill her children and herself before they could be taken back to a life of enslavement. When Garner was found by the marshals, she had already killed one of her daughters. The rest of her children were wounded but alive. The 'Margaret Garner Incident' became the longest slave fugitive trial, and the surviving members of the family (including Garner) were ultimately relocated to various plantations. This story was the inspiration of Toni Morrison's critically-acclaimed novel *Beloved*. See: Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987).

approaches to produce equally powerful results. For example, a primary source-based ISM display educates visitors about punishment books from plantations that 'record legs and ears chopped off, noses slit, and lashes delivered.' In this case, the reference to a type of historical source vividly conveys the violence inflicted on some enslaved people in a format other than artifact display. The NMAAHC inverts this approach by using artifacts to stress the dehumanization and emotional impact of slavery. In the portion of *Slavery and Freedom* that deals with the domestic slave trade, one glass case includes a slave auction block, a red flag from the Old Slave Mart in Charleston, and 'Ashley's Sack'—a sack 'filled with love' that was gifted to an enslaved girl before she was sold away from her mother.[63] Both the ISM's punishment book display and the NMAAHC's slave auction display demonstrate the horrors of slavery, but do so by altering common methods to cultivate unique displays.

Regardless of the ways that museums represent the horrors of slavery, this topic, though difficult, is a necessary element of the slavery narrative. Though the ISM, NMAAHC, and DuSable include themes of dehumanization and violence in their slavery representation, different approaches and varying levels of engagement result in distinct narratives. Rather than separating the topics of violence and dehumanization, the ISM presents violence within a framework of dehumanization and identity loss. The merging of these themes results in a narrative that unapologetically tackles slavery's complexities.

[63] The slave auction display is made even stronger by images and quotations surrounding these artifacts. For example, behind the auction block an image shows three African Americans (presumably a mother with her infant and teenage son) standing on an auction block. Another image depicts a slave auction in which the auctioneer is holding a black baby in a careless manner while the mother sobs on her knees. Quotations surround this display, including one that reads: 'Night and day, you could hear men and women screaming…ma, pa, sister or brother…taken without any warning….People was always dying from a broken heart.' Another reads: '…But the child was torn from the arms of its mother amid the most heart rending-shrieks from the mother and child on the one hand, and the bitter oats and cruel lashes from the tyrants on the other.' These quotations and images rehumanize enslaved people in ways that may be emotionally painful for visitors, but they are extraordinarily effective ways to ensure that these families are properly commemorated.

This triangular dynamic is present throughout *Enslavement and the Middle Passage* and challenges those who may underestimate the extent of slave abuse.

The NMAAHC takes a different approach, devoting more space to the emotional impact of slavery. In addition to this balance, displays that engage with violence are strategically positioned around other displays that represent black agency, which ensures that the narrative remains focused on the strength and courage of enslaved people who, even in the face of such violence, could 'make a way from no way'. Moreover, both the ISM and NMAAHC maintain authentic narratives by balancing the spectacular (the physical impact of slavery) with the mundane (the emotional impact of slavery)—even though the latter is inherently more difficult to represent in a museum setting. Unlike the ISM and NMAAHC, the DuSable limits its exploration of the emotional and physical tolls of slavery to its displays on the slave trade. While the slave trade displays are effective within their own context, these themes could also be considered within the framework of slavery in a separate display in order to demonstrate the ways that each situation produced different experiences.

CENTERING NARRATIVES ON AGENCY

Representing slavery's most horrific qualities is essential in museum displays, but to create authentic and empowering narratives it is important that these themes are balanced with examples of black agency. When agency is centrally and powerfully positioned in exhibits, visitors are discouraged from considering enslaved people entirely as victims—a portrayal that is historically inaccurate and undeserving of generations of slaves who used ingenuity and courage to resist the intended dehumanization of the institution.[64] Museums can engage

[64] The balance between victimization and agency is prominent not only in museological representations of slavery, but in the broader public discourse surrounding the era and its commemoration. For example, Derek H. Alderman has detailed the ways that this struggle manifested itself within the African-American community in Savannah as they debated about the proposed inscription for a new monument. Alderman

with this topic in several ways, but the ISM, NMAAHC, and DuSable examine agency through the lenses of experiences, cultures, and resistance. These themes demonstrate the ways that African Americans defied the odds under the harshest conditions.

During the era of slavery, region and crop culture had a direct impact on slave experiences—for example, an enslaved person on a Virginian tobacco plantation would live a notably different life than his counterpart on a South Carolinian rice plantation. This diversity is central to understanding American slavery and the cultures that arose from the inhumane conditions of the institution. As historian Ira Berlin writes: 'The lives of slaves…changed over time and differed from place to place….Thus slavery was not one thing but many.'[65] Because understanding regional experiences is essential in slavery education, it is important that black history museums engage with the topic to challenge the misconception of a monolithic slave 'experience'. This homogenized view of slavery collapses diversity into a singular experience while presenting a version of the era that is accurate but not authentic. In order to authentically represent diverse slave experiences, curators can consider slavery through geographic and work lenses—two approaches incorporated in displays at the ISM and NMAAHC.

The ISM and NMAAHC begin this narrative by examining the ways that slave experiences vary based on location. The ISM touches on regional and crop variety throughout *Enslavement and the Middle Passage*. In one display, a flip book is used to

notes that some of the fiercest debates were between those who wanted to emphasize the horrors of slavery and those who wanted to focus on resistance and agency. The ways that museums address these two elements, then, is relevant to public discourse relating to race and its place in American memory. See: Derek H. Alderman, 'Surrogation and the Politics of Remembering Slavery in Savannah, Georgia', *Journal of Historical Geography* 36 (2010), 90-101 (pp. 98-100).

[65] Ira Berlin, 'Coming to Terms with Slavery in Twenty-First-Century America'. In James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton (eds), *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (New York and London: The New Press, 2006), 1-18 (p. 7). Berlin writes elsewhere: 'The lives of slaves differed as much as those of free laborers differed across both time and space….While the Atlantic Creole Paulo d'Angola of New Amsterdam shared the status of slave with Phillis Wheatley of Boston, Frederick Douglass of Baltimore, and Harriet Jacobs of Edenton, North Carolina, their lives in bondage were as different from one another as from those of John Winthrop, George Washington, Harriet Beecher, and Abraham Lincoln in freedom.' See: Berlin, 'American Slavery in History and Memory', p. 1262.

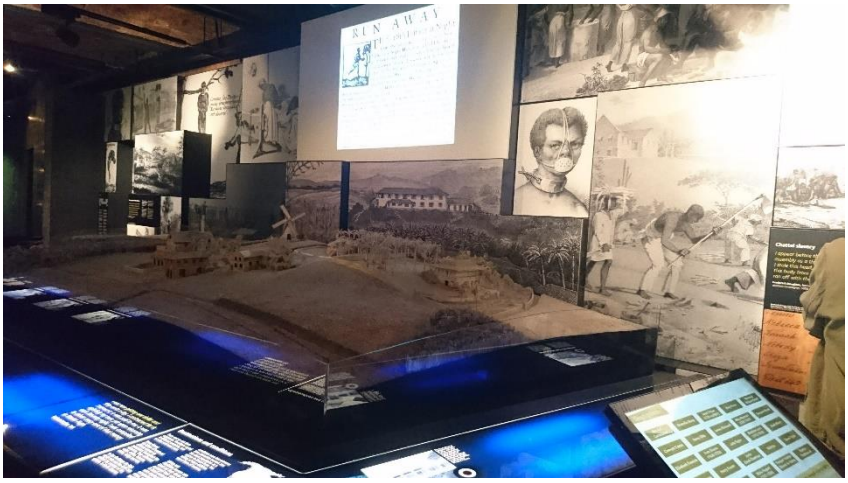
explain different experiences in the Carolinas and Georgia, the Chesapeake region, and Central and South America. Similarly, NMAAHC's 'Enslaving Colonial North America' display teaches visitors about varied slave experiences through geographically-focused exhibits—each with extensive information on the Chesapeake, the Lowcountry, Louisiana, and the Northern colonies. Through each of these displays visitors will learn about the diversity within slave experiences, as well as gaining a better understanding of the triangular relationship between crop, place, and culture.

Both of these regional displays teach visitors about this dynamic, but each institution produces a distinct narrative that is effective for its own reasons. The topic of regional variety within the United States is more extensively explored in the NMAAHC and the addition of maps, timelines, and artifacts adds depth and detail to this set of displays. Because each region is given a considerable amount of space within the gallery, visitors will gain a thorough understanding of the way that place affected slave experiences in America—information that is reinforced by the aesthetically-stimulating nature of each display. In this way, the NMAAHC places more of an emphasis on American regional slave experiences than the ISM.

While the NMAAHC examines the various American regions of slavery, the ISM incorporates its international themes into these displays by highlighting slave experiences in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. Moreover, the ISM compares these experiences with one another; for example, the ISM is the only museum in this study to differentiate between absentee ownership on Caribbean plantations and traditional ownership on American plantations. Additionally, the ISM includes touch screens that compare the experiences of house and field slaves, helping to further dispel the idea of a singular slave experience and, as a result, embracing diversity of historical experiences. These displays add a comparative element and an international framework to the museum's

examination of regional experiences, resulting in a unique narrative that sits comfortably in the broader institutional focus on the Atlantic world.

Slave experiences are also explored through the lens of daily life, which builds a foundation for visitors to learn about slave cultures by first establishing the experiences—both working and personal—of African Americans. The ISM, NMAAHC, and DuSable engage with daily life, but each museum adopts different approaches to do so. One approach, used by the ISM and NMAAHC, is considering the daily lives of enslaved people through the lens of a particular space. In the ISM this is achieved in the replica of a St Kitts plantation, which is comprised of a slave village, cane field, sugar factory, hospital, prison, punishment yard, and the great house. Placards and touch screens are dotted on the perimeter of this display, encouraging visitors to learn more about daily slave experiences.[66]



St Kitts plantation replica, ISM

Similarly, the NMAAHC represents the lives of enslaved African Americans through the Point of Pines cabin, a reconstructed slave cabin from South Carolina's Edisto

[66] Placards explaining these topics are accompanied with buttons and, when pressed, the correlating area on the plantation replica illuminates to help the visitor connect the information to its corresponding plantation part.

Island.[67] Like the ISM's St Kitts replica, the Point of Pines display is surrounded by placards that use the lens of a slave cabin to discuss themes like daily life, families, communities, and work. Both of these displays achieve effectiveness through their aesthetic and innovative presentation methods. While the daily lives of enslaved people could have simply been examined through a series of placards, the inclusion of the St Kitts replica and the Point of Pines cabin invites visitors into the topic through large, eye-catching displays—an approach that can break the monotony of text-heavy exhibits.

Point of Pines cabin, NMAAHC

The topic of daily life is also addressed at the DuSable and in a different NMAAHC display. The DuSable's artifact-focused emphasis on daily life is brief and tends to focus solely on work experiences. The items in this display—an 1836 plantation pocket journal from slaveholder William Hale, a pair of shoes with a corresponding bill of sale from 1860, Charleston slave badges, an 1837 receipt for hired-out slaves, a machete

[67] For more on this particular acquisition, see for example: Paul Bisceglio, 'Slave Cabin Set to Become Centerpiece of New Smithsonian Museum', *Smithsonian Magazine* (13 May 2013) <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/slave-cabin-set-to-become-centerpiece-of-new-smithsonian-museum-59052319/> [accessed on 1 July 2018]; Haleema Shah, 'This South Carolina Cabin Is Now a Crown Jewel in the Smithsonian Collections', *Smithsonian Magazine* (2 November 2018) <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/south-carolina-cabin-has-become-crown-jewel-smithsonian-collections-180970681/> [accessed on 16 November 2018].

from the Dominican Republic, and iron hand-forged nails that may belong to the Monticello collection—teach visitors how enslaved people were assigned monetary worth, how often a slaveholder purchased shoes for his slaves, and how enslaved people were identified through a badge system in Charleston when they left the owner's home. Similarly—though in much more detail—the NMAAHC's 'Life & Work' display examines the ways that enslaved African Americans lived in the antebellum era. Like the DuSable's display, work is a central component of this exhibit; however, unlike the DuSable, the breadth of this exhibit extends past work to incorporate other elements of daily life like religion, communities, and families. The thorough nature of 'Life & Work' provides insight into the multi-faceted lives of enslaved African Americans and serves as a reminder that a narrative focusing only on work is too narrow to be authentic.

All these institutions engage with the broad theme of daily life but, as detailed, there are many ways to approach this representation. Examining this topic through the lens of a specific space produces intriguing displays in the ISM and NMAAHC. By using a plantation model—rather than being limited by the availability of artifacts—the ISM benefits from an unrestricted re-creation of daily life on a Caribbean slave plantation. Though information is provided about the slave master, the focus of the narrative is largely on enslaved Africans and their daily experiences. In this way, work experiences are balanced by culture, resistance, and relationships, providing a more authentic and comprehensive depiction of the period. Similarly, the NMAAHC's Point of Pines cabin display allows visitors to learn about the daily lives of enslaved African Americans in a fresh way, and the framing of the topic around explorations of home, family, and community cultivate an intimate and relatable tone that connects visitors to the history being presented. Like dehumanization, daily life is an aspect of slavery that can be hard to convey in museums. Easily dismissed as too mundane, this topic may be overlooked by some curators eager to entertain visitors. By utilizing the lens of place—and combining

this lens with aesthetically impressive displays—curators at the ISM and NMAAHC not only address this intangible topic, but also make it a centerpiece of the room.

The DuSable's display, on the other hand, is tied exclusively to a small collection of artifacts and, as such, limits the narrative to the specific sphere of work. Though these items convey some information about the intersection between economics and daily life, they tell us more about work experiences than other elements of slave life. For the sake of black agency and resistance, it is important that work and non-work experiences are disentangled from one another—the former tells us about the working and economic portion of their lives, while the latter extends to personal experiences within these communities.[68] Because the narrative focuses disproportionately on work, the period is presented inauthentically. In this area, then, the DuSable may benefit from following the lead of the ISM and NMAAHC by extending its scope of daily life to incorporate non-work elements of this topic.

Museum displays exploring African-American agency during the slavery period often emphasize the experiences of enslaved people, but it is also important for curators to include the experiences of freedmen and free black communities.[69] The ISM and the NMAAHC both dedicate space to this topic and explore freedmen though different geographic lenses. The ISM focuses on maroon communities in the Caribbean and South

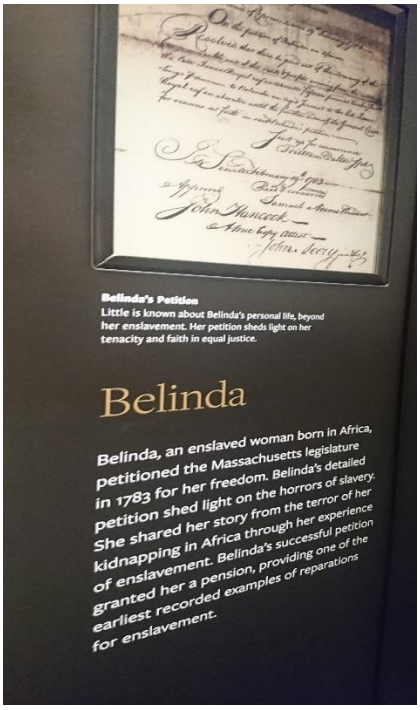
[68] For more on the lives of enslaved African Americans outside of their work, see research that focuses on elements like cultures, communities, and families. See for example: Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974); Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976); Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); John Wesley Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

[69] For more on freedmen and free black communities in antebellum America, see for example: Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974); James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *Black Bostonians: Family Life and Community Struggle* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979); James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community, and Protest Among Northern Free Blacks, 1700-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). For more on maroons in the Caribbean, see for example: Richard Price, *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1973); Kenneth M. Bilby, *True-Born Maroons* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005); Alvin Thompson, *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2006).

America. The ISM's maroon narrative highlights the groups' skills and effectiveness—a message that is reinforced by surrounding annotations detailing slave rebellions throughout the Americas. Though the NMAAHC briefly engages with maroons, the topic of freedmen is approached more extensively within an American framework. A strong aspect of the NMAAHC—and an approach that could be further adopted by the ISM—is the use of individual stories.[70] These stories may center on an individual, like Richard Allen who purchased his freedom in 1783 and went on to found the African Methodist Episcopal denomination, or entire community achievements, like the building of a thriving free community in Philadelphia. When museologically representing dark periods dealing with large numbers and dehumanization (like slavery or the Holocaust), telling individual stories rehumanizes historical narratives and creates connections between the visitor and the display's subjects.[71]

[70] The ISM maroon display includes images of prominent figures like Zumbi and Nanny, presenting the opportunity to provide further information about these individuals.

[71] For example, this is mastered in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum through *Remember the Children: Daniel's Story*, in which visitors go through the entire exhibition through the perspective of one boy who grew up in Nazi Germany. It should also be noted that while teaching these eras through individual stories can benefit the broader narrative, it can also provide accurate—rather than authentic—representations of that era. Curators can avoid this by either providing a broad spectrum of people and experiences in these displays, or, when a story being told is not representative of ordinary experiences, to indicate this exceptionality in the display. See: 'Remember the Children: Daniel's Story', *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* <https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/museum-exhibitions/remember-the-children-daniels-story> [accessed on 20 October 2018].



A petition for freedom, NMAAHC

Whether museum displays highlight experiences of maroons in the Caribbean or African Americans in the North, this approach underscores the agency and ability of African descendants. The dominant role of slave experiences can sometimes overshadow the experiences of freedmen, but both topics are central to narratives that explore 18th and 19th century themes of slavery and freedom. Moreover, the maroon and freedmen displays at the ISM and NMAAHC demonstrate that varying geographic lenses can produce entirely distinct narratives. By tailoring the displays in this way, curators use the power of place to make the narrative more relevant to museum visitors. These approaches help museums craft unique stories that are informative and fresh to visitors—an important process that attracts and maintains visitor interest by linking narratives to surrounding landscapes.

In addition to representing agency through experiences, museums also examine the topic through the lens of culture. Culture-based displays contribute significant elements to the slavery narrative, emphasizing the agency, ability, and resilience of enslaved African Americans. While the ISM's overall engagement with culture does not extensively extend to *Enslavement and the Middle Passage*, the NMAAHC and DuSable include this topic in

their slavery displays. Consistent with its broader emphasis on cultures, the NMAAHC engages extensively with black cultures. This expansive topic is examined in digestible themes that help visitors understand the multi-faceted character of culture—home and community, family, education, and religion. The DuSable's engagement with black culture falls considerably short of its NMAAHC counterpart. A couple items in *Freedom and Resistance* begin to explore material culture, though neither artifact has roots in the slavery period.[72] This lackluster exploration of antebellum black culture is a missed opportunity and speaks to overall gaps in the DuSable's narrative.

Because culture is such an inviting way for museum visitors to learn about history, the DuSable may benefit from building up this portion of the museum journey, further highlighting black agency through the lenses of the rich cultures and tenacious resiliency that defined these communities. The NMAAHC, on the other hand, centers much of the gallery's narrative on black culture, and its division of culture into smaller themes help visitors break down this broad topic into more digestible branches. The ISM engages extensively with culture in *Life in West Africa* and, to a slightly lesser extent, *Legacy*; however, *Enslavement and the Middle Passage* is dominated by themes like economics of slavery, dehumanization, violence, and daily life. As such, the latter gallery may benefit from further exploration into the ways that enslaved Africans created and maintained distinct cultures despite the dehumanizing conditions of enslavement.

Finally, the themes of resistance, revolt, and escape are often used in museum narratives to demonstrate African-American agency during slavery.[73] While the DuSable

[72] For example, a woven field cradle in the display is said to be often mistaken as an antebellum item, though it dates from 1870 and was likely used by former slaves working as sharecroppers in the postbellum era. A hand-stitched quilt made by Melvina Young also grabs the attention of visitors, but, though Young probably learned how to sew and quilt while a slave, this particular quilt was not created until she was freed.

[73] For more on themes like resistance, revolt, and escape in American and Caribbean slave communities, see for example: Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*; Eugene Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979); Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains, Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the*

limits its engagement with resistance to the slave trade, the ISM and NMAAHC engage with this topic within the context of slavery, though they do so through different lenses. Through placards in *Enslavement and the Middle Passage*, ISM visitors learn about the ways that enslaved people resisted their condition—from subtle approaches like feigning illness or working slowly, to more overt resistance like uprisings and self-emancipation. Surprisingly, the NMAAHC does not engage significantly with these themes, choosing to focus instead on resistance by freedmen. Displays exploring abolitionist speaking tours and black-organized protest rallies teach visitors about the ways that freedmen fought against slavery despite the risks associated with this insurgency. The most unique part of the NMAAHC resistance narrative, however, is a display entitled 'Petitioning for Freedom', which presents the stories of slaves who sued for their freedom, guiding visitors through the legal transition from enslavement to freedom.

These displays convey the ways that African Americans resisted slavery both as slaves and as freedmen, as well as the risks associated with even the subtlest form of resistance. As demonstrated in the variety of stories told by the ISM and NMAAHC, resistance was a broad spectrum that ranged from faking illness to suing for freedom and it is important for curators to accentuate the courage that these acts required. While revolts and escapes attract more historical attention and lend themselves better to entertaining museum displays, it is also important for visitors to learn about this aspect of black agency. Moreover, while museums often center displays on well-known individuals, resistance is often examined through the perspective of ordinary African Americans whose names are unfamiliar but whose acts were just as brave as those of Frederick Douglass or Harriet Tubman. In this way, an authentic representation of slave resistance not only addresses an

Plantation (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

under-appreciated historical narrative, but also reminds visitors to look past famous individuals to find individual stories of courage.

When peaceful resistance was no longer an option, resistance could escalate into bloody rebellions. Throughout the Atlantic world, slave revolts dominated the fears of masters and often resulted in harsher rules for enslaved African Americans. The ISM, NMAAHC, and DuSable all engage with uprisings to various extents. The ISM examines the theme of revolts most extensively, using its characteristic international framework to highlight revolts throughout the Americas on a block timeline, which includes information about a wide range of events from the first slave revolt in Hispaniola in 1522 to the 1865 uprising in Morant Bay.[74] The ISM's engagement with slave uprisings places the abolition of the slave trade and slavery within a broader context, highlighting the cumulative impact of these individual rebellions throughout the Atlantic world. The NMAAHC places far less of an emphasis on slave revolts, but some uprisings are referenced at various points in *Slavery and Freedom*. Throughout the gallery, visitors will learn about the Haitian Revolution, the *Amistad*, and (to a much lesser extent) Nat Turner, but none of these topics dominate the narrative; rather, they complement other themes to demonstrate the multi-faceted concept of agency.[75] Unlike the ISM and NMAAHC, the DuSable limits its exploration of slave revolts to the *Amistad*, omitting any other mention of specific revolts from its narrative. These three institutions, then, explore slave revolt to varying extents,

[74] For more on these uprisings, see for example: John Henrik Clarke, 'African Cultural Continuity and Slave Revolts in the New World: Part One', *Journal of Black Studies and Research* 8.1 (1976), 41-49; John Henrik Clarke, 'African Cultural Continuity and Slave Revolts in the New World: Part Two—Conclusion', *Journal of Black Studies and Research* 8.2 (1976), 2-9; Gad Heuman, *"The Killing Time": The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994); Devon Dick, 'The Role of the Maroons in the 1865 Morant Bay Freedom War', *International Journal of Public Theology* 7.4 (2013), 444-457.

[75] For more on the *Amistad*, see works referenced in footnote 37 in this chapter. For more on the Haitian Revolution, see for example: Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Jeremy D. Popkin, *Facing Racial Revolution: Eyewitness Accounts of the Haitian Insurrection* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). For more on Nat Turner, see for example: Kenneth S. Greenberg (ed.), *Nat Turner: A Slave Rebellion in History and Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); David F. Allmendinger Jr., *Nat Turner and the Rising in Southampton County* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

and while the ISM centralizes the topic, the NMAAHC and DuSable use uprisings as a secondary theme that complements other aspects of the broader agency-based narrative.

Children of the Amistad statue, DuSable Museum

It is interesting to note that some uprisings are easier for museums to engage with than others. For example, the story of the *Amistad* reads like fiction. The agency of the newly-captured Africans is front and center in this narrative, and the happy ending evokes positivity rarely associated with the history of slavery. In stark contrast to the easiness of the *Amistad* narrative is the Nat Turner uprising. Turner's story may be more difficult to comprehend, as the 'good' and 'bad' aspects of the story blur, creating an unsatisfyingly complicated narrative that is difficult to represent. Because of its difficult nature, it makes sense that while all three institutions use the *Amistad* rebellion to exemplify slave agency and resistance, only one museum in this study addresses Turner.[76] Moreover, even the single engagement with Turner in the NMAAHC skirted the issue's contentiousness.[77]

[76] Presumably, the ISM alludes to the Nat Turner rebellion in *Legacy* on a placard that reads: '1830-1832 Final wave of rebellions in Virginia, Jamaica, Barbados, British Guiana and Brazil'; however, the Turner revolt is not detailed.

[77] While the nearby display on the *Amistad* includes details about the events, the Turner display—consisting of a small annotation and a brick from the Whitehead plantation—merely states: 'Turner claimed that God called on him to "slay my enemies with their own weapons." He took the life of Margaret Whitehead during

These comparisons demonstrate that not all slave revolts are equally compelling and that, given the choice, curators may choose to avoid difficult subjects that skew a convenient binary narrative. Crafting displays that favor nuance can be risky—though some visitors may be more satisfied with narratives that over-simplistically align good with black and bad with white, these politicized displays fail to authentically convey the period. When contextualized effectively and comprehensively, however, representations of slave revolts can engage with agency through the lens of rebellion without neglecting history's nuances.

Stories of agency also abound in displays representing escape. While general information about runaway slaves is often presented, the narrative tends to center primarily on the Underground Railroad and Harriet Tubman.[78] The DuSable does not broach this subject, but the ISM and NMAAHC both examine self-emancipation through these two lenses. The ISM presents this topic in a child-friendly manner, using an interactive display that guides the visitor through each step on the path from slavery to freedom. This innovative display seems to be designed with younger visitors in mind, but it teaches visitors of all ages about the courage of runaway slaves. The NMAAHC also addresses these manifestations of agency in *Slavery and Freedom*, but the primary display on this topic is one focused on Harriet Tubman and her accomplishments. The display, which centers on Tubman's lace shawl and hymnal, introduces visitors to this inspirational figure through her personal possessions.

his rebellion.' The information missing from this annotation is the extent of the brutality of the murder of Whitehead, as well as the fact that she was a sympathetic anti-slavery friend of Turner's and the only person killed directly by him.

[78] For more on the Underground Railroad, see for example: Fergus Bordewich, *Bound for Canaan: The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Amistad, 2006); Eric Foner, *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2015). For more on Harriet Tubman, see for example: Jean McMahon Humez, *Harriet Tubman: The Life and the Life Stories* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); Catherine Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 2004).

Underground Railroad display, ISM

Though they use the same entry points (Tubman and the Railroad), the ISM and NMAAHC position their narratives in distinct ways. The ISM uses an interactive display to evoke empathy, encouraging visitors to put themselves in the shoes of those who escaped (or tried to escape) through the Underground Railroad. The intimate connection between visitor and historical participant stands in stark contrast to the engagement with this topic in the NMAAHC, where the Tubman display risks feeding into a narrative that prioritizes the experiences of the famous over those of the ordinary. While Tubman's story needs to be remembered, countless other people who worked along the Underground Railroad—as well as those who used it to escape enslavement—can be neglected if narratives over-emphasize fame. Though representing the Underground Railroad through the Tubman display may focus on exceptional experiences of well-known figures, if considered alongside the freedmen display (described previously) there is a cumulative counterweight between famous and ordinary experiences, but the balance could be better struck by further engaging with lesser-known stories of self-emancipation.

Regardless of how each institution engages with the violence and dehumanization of slavery or with the agency of those who endured it, these two themes are the most dominating aspects of slave-based museum narratives. A delicate balance should be struck between these components in order to create displays that authentically convey the elements of slavery. The former results in more emotional displays that often focus on dehumanization, violence, and loss of identity, and, though difficult, these displays provide insight into the most disturbing elements of slavery. Agency-based displays, which often use experiences, cultures, and resistance as lenses into the topic, add an empowering tone to these heavy narratives. When curators achieve this balance, they teach visitors that despite the dehumanization of slavery, enslaved men and women maintained strong cultures and identities characterized by strength, resilience, and community.

The ISM, NMAAHC, and DuSable blend their slavery narratives with varying efficacy. The ISM's *Enslavement and the Middle Passage* engages with dehumanization, violence, and loss of identity more extensively than agency; however, the latter is not entirely absent in the gallery's displays. Moreover, though agency may not be the primary focus in this particular gallery, *Life in West Africa* and *Legacy* strongly emphasize culture, resiliency, and courage, which balances the museum's overall narrative. The NMAAHC's *Slavery and Freedom* takes a different approach by balancing a cultural narrative with one that explores the emotional impact of slavery.[79] The dominant role of culture—not just in this gallery, but throughout the entire museum—naturally tips the narrative toward agency. While displays examining the emotional impact of slavery balance this narrative, curators

[79] Lonnie Bunch referenced this balance in an interview: '[The NMAAHC is] not a Holocaust museum. It's not a museum of horrible moments. But it's a museum that tells an accurate history that has moments of sorrow and moments of triumph and resiliency.' See: Kriston Capps, 'Don't Call it the Blacksonian: Lonnie Bunch on America's Best New Museum', *City Lab* (30 December 2016) <https://www.citylab.com/design/2016/12/dont-call-it-the-blacksonian-lonnie-bunch-on-americas-best-new-museum/511934/> [accessed on 19 October 2018].

do not extensively engage with the theme of violence. In contrast to these institutions, the DuSable's slavery displays are lacking. While its slave trade section reconciles these two themes, the slavery narrative requires increased visibility of both elements outside of a transatlantic slave trade framework.

In addition to balancing the horrors of slavery and the agency of the enslaved, effective museum narratives also merge the stories of famous and non-famous individuals. In a speech given on International Slavery Day, NMAAHC director Lonnie Bunch said that though he was 'humbled' by leaders like Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, or Toussaint L'Ouverture:

> *I am even more impressed by the nameless men and women who arose each day and vowed that the field would not break them; or by those who despite the workload struggled to ensure that there would be energy left for family; or those who struggled to keep their culture alive, their humor and their humanity intact.*[80]

Bunch's sentiment raises an important concern in representations of slavery. Similar to the problems that can arise from representing the civil rights era, slavery narratives often revolve around national leaders. This process prioritizes the stories, achievements, and legacies of those who achieved fame, while under-acknowledging the experiences of ordinary people.

The ISM and the DuSable avoid the pitfalls of over-emphasizing famous figures by keeping narratives objective and general. The ISM's 'Black Achievers Wall' acknowledges significant individuals, but the rest of the museum's narrative is broadly focused on ordinary experiences and broader histories. The DuSable takes a similar approach, though the brevity of the slavery displays renders it difficult to properly analyze. The NMAAHC, on the other hand, tends to place more of an emphasis on famous individuals throughout the entirety of its museum narrative. In *Slavery and Freedom*

[80] Lonnie G. Bunch, 'The Challenge of Remembering Slavery'. In Anthony Tibbles (ed.), *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity* (Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool, 2005), 125-130 (p. 128).

specifically, information about well-known historical figures is complemented by the introduction of non-famous individuals and communities, ensuring that visitors learn about key figures of the age while also acknowledging the efforts and accomplishments of ordinary people; however, further engagement with ordinary people involved in certain events (like the Underground Railroad) would better balance these portions of the museum journey.

Similarly, authentic slavery displays embrace the mundane as well as the spectacular. The collective memory of slavery often emphasizes the most extreme aspects of the institution, but in between dramatic moments were subtler, ordinary experiences. While more shocking elements of the period should not be overlooked, too much of a focus on these stories can distort proportions and neglect topics like daily life, working conditions, or the emotional impact of slavery. Though these more mundane topics are essential in the creation of authentic museum narratives, they are challenging to represent in this medium. For example, one of the most difficult aspects of slavery was long days of demanding physical labor in scorching southern heat; however, how do museums convey elements like exhaustion and weather to visitors? While these topics may be more easily incorporated into other mediums, such as films or books about the period, the museum setting naturally lends itself to more tangible, quantifiable, overt elements of slavery.

Despite this challenge, curators can craft innovative displays that represent all aspects of slavery—even those that are more difficult to convey. This is achieved by the museums in this study to varying levels of success. The ISM and NMAAHC do this most effectively through their St Kitts and Point of Pines exhibits—each welcomes visitors to consider more mundane topics like life, work, and family through an aesthetically impressive large-scale display. The DuSable's focus on working elements of slavery may not present an entirely authentic depiction of the period—as noted, work should be balanced by other elements of enslaved life in order to be authentic—but it does highlight

some daily experiences of enslaved African Americans. Additionally, an emphasis on the emotional impact of slavery, though a dominant feature of the ISM and NMAAHC, was absent from the DuSable. All three of these institutions could further incorporate the more 'ordinary' aspects of slavery into their displays. Features like using climate control in certain rooms, further engaging with individual stories, and increased emphasis on the emotional impact of slavery may help visitors better empathize with enslaved people by understanding that the invisible wounds of slavery are just as important as whip marks.

Sometimes the process of crafting museological narratives transcends the walls of the institution to incorporate relevant historical sites in the surrounding area. Because of the era's significance, the legacy of slavery tends to dominate commemorative landscapes—particularly in America. Curators can capitalize on proximity to surrounding landscapes by connecting them to internal narratives. Because this connection could elevate museum narratives, it is surprising that the only museum in this study to engage with nearby slavery sites is the ISM. Liverpool is a city built by slave money and its legacy continues today through building names, street signs, and historical markers.[81] In *Legacy* the ISM extensively engages with local connections to slavery, and this process situates the museum within its surrounding city in a unique way while also leading residents of the city in addressing a painful past.

[81] It is particularly important for the ISM to highlight the connection between slavery and historical/modern economic development in Britain. This is true for two reasons, both highlighted by A.V. Seaton. First, even during the age of slavery, beneficiaries of slavery in Britain rarely—if ever—had to face the source of their wealth. As Seaton explains: 'Because Britain was so far removed from the physical locations of slave trafficking, it was possible for entrepreneurs, and indeed whole geographical communities…to benefit economically, without having to have first-hand contact with the mechanisms of oppression that produced their wealth.' Second, modern families and institutions in Britain are far more likely to have retained their wealth than their American counterparts. Seaton writes: '[W]hile the American Civil War ruined many southern families who derived their wealth from slavery, in the UK the corresponding economic and social legacies continue….[T]he direct and indirect beneficiaries of slavery included families and institutions that still exist today.' For these reasons—both the spatial disconnect in historical Britain and the temporal disconnect in modern Britain—the ISM makes a powerful statement with its acknowledgement of these economic links. See: Seaton, 'Sources of Slavery—Destinations of Slavery', pp. 120-121.

While the DuSable could have done more to connect its narrative with surrounding slavery sites, it is particularly disappointing that the NMAAHC fails to engage with area landscapes. Washington, D.C. and Virginia are home to several sites and monuments that memorialize slavery; for example, the NMAAHC stands near the Washington and Jefferson memorials (a 6 minute and 20 minute walk by foot respectively), and it is a reasonable drive away from Washington's Mount Vernon (30 minutes away), Madison's Montpelier (2 hours away), and Jefferson's Monticello (2 ½ hours away). The proximity to these types of sites—as well as countless other relevant memorials, monuments, and plantations in the area—could have served as the basis of interesting displays and conversations within the NMAAHC's *Slavery and Freedom*. These connections would be made even more poignant due to the fact that many out-of-town NMAAHC visitors will likely pair their visit to Washington, D.C. and Virginia with trips to these other sites.

This local engagement in the NMAAHC could also solve another problem stemming from unbalanced narratives: the omission of white slave holders. Just as proslavery arguments do not appear in any of the museums in this study, nor do the lives of white slave owners. Apart from plantation journals, visitors will not learn how slave owners lived, thought, or worked. By incorporating more information about local slave plantations, curators could address this omission and provide a more comprehensive, authentic depiction of slavery.[82] In fact, this theme could be incorporated further by not only mentioning nearby plantations, but by building a plantation replica within the museum. Just as Auschwitz has preserved the Commandant's house in order to contrast its luxury with the horrors of the concentration camp, black history museums (particularly in the South) could use a plantation replica to juxtapose the harsh conditions of slave life with the comfortable lifestyle of slave owners. A side-by-side replica of a plantation and a slave

[82] This is not to suggest that the plantation owners should become the focus of these displays, as this focus already exists in many plantation museums. Instead, I argue that providing more information about plantation owners would develop visitors' understanding of slaves by contextualizing their stories and juxtaposing their experiences to those of slave-owning whites.

cabin—similar to the BCRI's classroom comparison, as detailed in the next chapter— may illuminate this juxtaposition and provide visitors with a powerful visual contrast between these two ways of life.

CONCLUSION

Creating authentic slavery narratives in museums is incredibly complex, centering on several intersecting points: the intersection between dehumanization, violence, and agency; the intersection between the spectacular and the mundane; the intersection between key figures and ordinary people; and the intersection between the local and foreign. In addition to these dynamics, an authentic museological representation of slavery also embraces complexity, nuance, and diversity instead of homogenizing or over-simplifying the past. Miscalculating the ratio of these elements in museum displays may skew visitors' understanding of the period, resulting in narratives that, while accurate, fail to authentically represent the era. It is important that curators find the right balance between all of these elements, particularly because effectively-crafted slavery displays build foundations for visitors who will rely on that information to understand subsequent periods of black history. In this way, the story of slavery is truly the cornerstone of black experiences in the Atlantic world and, as such, museological representations of this topic are strongest when approached with balance, compassion, and creativity.

THE LONG SECTIONAL CRISIS

INTRODUCTION

The tumultuous relationship between the North and the South defined America's first century as a nation. These tensions—which largely stemmed from attitudes toward slavery—reached new heights from 1820 through the Civil War's end in 1865; however, they were evident from the nation's founding and nearly rendered the forming of a Union impossible in the 1780s. Because these divisions centered primarily on slavery, the two stages of America's sectional crisis—the early phase (the 1770s and 1780s) and the classical phase (the 1820s through 1861)—should be thoroughly evaluated in African-American history museums.[83] In this study, these topics are addressed by the NMAAHC and, to a lesser extent, the ISM. With the exception of a few small items, the DuSable overlooks this period entirely—a problem that will be explored throughout this section.[84]

DE-POLITICIZING HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

Though most slavery displays in museums focus on the antebellum era, how each institution deals with attitudes toward slavery in early America is an important component of its overall narrative. The process of fighting for freedom while maintaining the institution of slavery is undoubtedly one of the most blatant hypocrisies in history. The era is full of contradictions and complexities, and as historian Joseph Ellis writes:

[83] While the section crisis is most commonly positioned in the period of 1820-1860, I argue that this period should be elongated to include the earlier slavery debates that arose in the late 18th century and contributed to the founding of a fragile union. Thus, I have broadened the sectional crisis, conceptualizing it in these two phases.

[84] In 'Freedom and Resistance', there are three items that allude to the sectional crisis—though they are not accompanied by any annotations. On the wall is a famous black and white engraving of an enslaved man kneeling on one knee with shackles around his wrists and ankles, and the banner under his feet asks: 'Am I not a man and a brother?' A smaller version of the drawing is copied to the side, along with a glass case holding a British antislavery halfpenny. The comparative lack of sectional crisis information in the DuSable is particularly puzzling given the local relevancy to the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858.

> *While there is plenty of room for honest disagreement over the viability of any emancipation policy in the revolutionary era, slavery remains a permanent stain on the legacy of the founders, as most of them knew it would.*[85]

Many of the nation's framers were aware of this contradiction, and the friction between those who supported and opposed slavery threatened the Union's creation in the 1780s. When representing political attitudes toward slavery in early America, museums should strike a balance between emphasizing the period's inherent hypocrisy (as the NMAAHC aptly calls it, the 'Paradox of Liberty') with a narrative that embraces nuances and avoids common missteps, such as homogenizing the Founding Fathers' attitudes toward slavery. This is a difficult combination to achieve, made even more challenging by the manipulation and generalization of the era by the modern political right and left, respectively. Reframing a beloved era of American history is a daunting task, but if done correctly these museological perspectives can challenge politicized historical narratives and encourage visitors to critically reassess the period.

In this study, only the NMAAHC addresses the early sectional crisis during the founding period. An impressive NMAAHC display entitled 'The Paradox of Liberty' uses visual quantification and juxtaposition methods to underscore one of the major hypocrisies about slavery in young America: its incompatibility with the fledgling nation's commitment to freedom, liberty, and equality. A significant amount of space in *Slavery and Freedom* is used to demonstrate this duplicity, and the methods used are original and effective. After learning about African-American contributions to the Revolutionary War, visitors walk into a large, open space where they are greeted by a life-sized statue of Thomas Jefferson. He stands in front of a pile of several hundred bricks, each of which

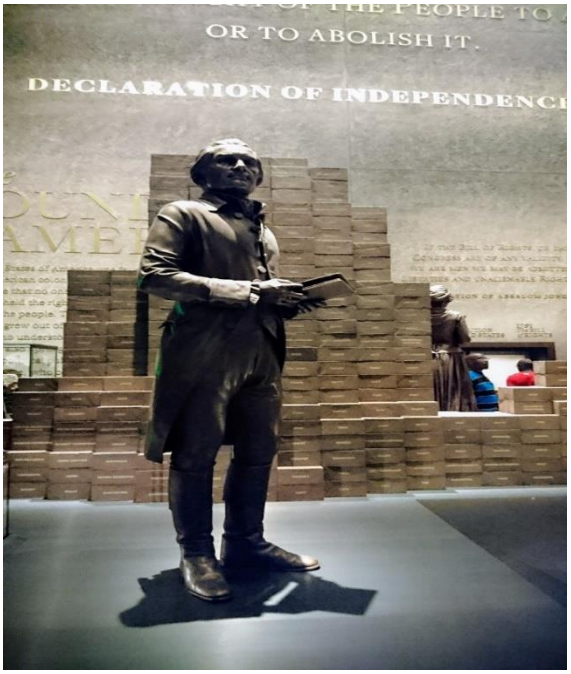
[85] Joseph J. Ellis, *American Creation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), p. 10.

have the name of one of Jefferson's slaves inscribed on them (including Sally Hemings and their six children).[86]

This visually-quantifying method effectively highlights the extent of Jefferson's direct involvement with slavery and the placard in front of the display further educates readers about his relationship with the institution, though it fails to explore Jefferson's doubts about the morality of slavery and his attempts to introduce legislation that would abolish the institution.[87] The method of juxtaposition is also used to great effect in this display. Behind Jefferson and the bricks is a large wall with an excerpt from Jefferson's Declaration of Independence inscribed in large gold letters. The Jefferson statue surrounded by the brick display in front of the symbolic phrase 'All men are created equal' creates a powerful image and invites visitors to reflect upon the conflicting values in the founding era—a quandary that disturbed some of the Founding Fathers and caused significant tension in the Constitutional Convention.

[86] For more on Sally Hemings and her relationship with Thomas Jefferson, see for example: Annette Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1997); Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008). For more on Jefferson and his relationship to slavery, see for example: Virginius Dabney, *The Jefferson Scandals: A Rebuttal* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1981); Henry Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain: Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012); Annette Gordon-Reed and Peter S. Onuf, *"Most Blessed of the Patriarchs": Thomas Jefferson and the Empire of the Imagination* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2016).

[87] 'Thomas Jefferson and Slavery', *Monticello* <https://www.monticello.org/site/plantation-and-slavery/thomas-jefferson-and-slavery> [accessed 12 September 2017].



'Paradox of Liberty' display, NMAAHC

Following the Jefferson display, this narrative continues in a nearby placard arguing that the three primary founding documents 'supported slavery'.[88] This statement, and this portion of the museum narrative more broadly, glosses over an incredibly complex historical debate, extracting intricacies from a topic that can hardly be summed up in such a simple manner.[89] The critical textual analysis inherent to the extensive historical debate regarding the role of slavery in the Constitution and other founding documents is absent

[88] 'Founding documents' refers to the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.
[89] This over-simplistic approach is also baffling because Lonnie Bunch writes in a Smithsonian editorial: 'My goal for the last 11 years has been to create a museum that modelled the nation I was taught to expect: a nation that was diverse; that was fair; that was always struggling to make itself better—to perfect itself by living up to the ideals in our founding documents.' This is true—America's greatness has often been its striving toward the fulfilment of the nation's founding documents. This complexity, however—the acknowledgement that while the founding documents inarguably did not do enough to counter slavery and inequality, but it also provided an ideological and rhetorical framework within which those goals could be accomplished—is missing in the current display. See: Lonnie Bunch, 'The Definitive Story of How the National Museum of African American History and Culture Came to Be', *Smithsonian Magazine* (September 2016) <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/definitive-story-national-museum-african-american-history-culture-came-be-180960125/> [accessed on 6 November 2018]. For examples of the debate of the role of slavery in the founding documents, see for example: Staughton Lynd (ed.), *Class Conflict, Slavery, and the United States: Ten Essays* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967); Matthew Mason, *Slavery and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); David Waldstreicher, *Slavery's Constitution: From Revolution to Ratification* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2009); John Craig Hammond and Matthew Mason (eds), *Contesting Slavery: The Politics of Bondage and Freedom in the New American Nation* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011).

here, leaving visitors with an oversimplified understanding of some of the nation's most significant documents. Moreover, the display fails to examine *why* some Founders decided to set the contentious issue with slavery aside in order to convince the southern states to enter into a Union. By the Constitutional Convention, slavery had been abolished in Vermont (1777), Pennsylvania (1780), New Hampshire (1783), Massachusetts (1783), Connecticut (1784), and Rhode Island (1784); given this trend, framers who were uncomfortable with slavery believed that it was naturally dying and would do so on its own without national intervention (which would have threatened the forming of the Union).[90] Of course, no one could have predicted Eli Whitney's cotton gin (patented in 1793 but not validated until 1807) or the domestic slave trade it would create. This historical information would likely be of interest to visitors, enabling them to understand the nuances of the period; instead, they are encouraged to dismiss the Founders—and the documents they produced—as slave supporters.

Instead of exploring the complexities of the era and the varied opinions toward slavery among the Founders (Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were slave owners, though both men had conflicted views on the institution; George Washington was a slave owner who included a provision in his will freeing his slaves upon the death of his wife; Benjamin Franklin was a slaveholder who, later in life, became one of the nation's leading anti-slavery voices; John Adams, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton were abolitionists), these displays depict the men as a homogenous group with a singular vision of slavery's place in the nation.[91] By representing the paradoxical nature of Jefferson without

[90] For more on slavery and abolition in these states, see for example: Michelle Arnosky Sherburne, *Abolition and the Underground Railroad in Vermont* (Mount Pleasant: Arcadia Publishing, Inc., 2013); Gary B. Nash and Jean R. Soderlund, *Freedom by Degrees: Emancipation in Pennsylvania and its Aftermath* (New York ad Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Michelle Arnosky Sherburne, *Slavery and the Underground Railroad in New Hampshire* (Mount Pleasant: Arcadia Publishing, Inc., 2016); Chernoh M. Sesay, 'The Revolutionary Black Roots of Slavery's Abolition in Massachusetts', *The New England Quarterly* 87.1 (2014), 99-131; David Menschel, 'Abolition without Deliverance: The Law of Connecticut Slavery 1784-1848', *The Yale Law Journal* 111.1 (2001), 183-222; Christy Clark-Pujara, *Dark Work: The Business of Slavery in Rhode Island* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

[91] For more on these men, see for example: Paul Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001); Jon Meacham, *Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power*

highlighting the abolitionist sentiments of men like Thomas Paine, John Laurens, Benjamin Rush, Alexander Hamilton, or John Adams, the museum does a disservice to the early abolitionist movement.[92]

Overall, though these displays effectively highlight the disparity between the nation's founding principles and the institution of slavery, they omit the nuanced and detailed examination the topic truly warrants, furthering the misconception that the Founding Fathers (as a single group) approved of slavery. This, of course, should not undermine the abhorrent reliance on slavery in a nation founded on principles of freedom, liberty, and justice—rather it should act as a warning against neglecting history's complexities for the sake of a straightforward or politically convenient museum display. This issue reflects the wider trend in society for the legacy of the Founders to be misrepresented by some conservatives (thus misleadingly placing their modern ideologies within an inauthentic historical era, granting them 'legitimacy'), and for that same legacy to be oversimplified and rejected by some progressives (dismissing them all as a singular slave-supporting group and, thus, under-appreciating their various views and overall contributions to the nation).[93] Because this tendency is replicated in the NMAAHC, visitors may fail to understand the diversity of thought in this important period, which reinforces the habit of homogenizing history in collective memory.[94] An adjustment to these displays

(New York: Random House, 2012); Lynne Cheney, *James Madison: A Life Reconsidered* (New York: Viking, 2014); Ron Chernow, *Washington: A Life* (New York: Penguins Press, 2010);David Waldstreicher, *Runaway America: Benjamin Franklin, Slavery, and the American Revolution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004); David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001); Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004).

[92] For more about these men and their abolitionist efforts, see for example: Harvey J. Kaye, *Thomas Paine and the Promise of America* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2005); Gregory D. Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000); Stephen Fried, *Rush: Revolution, Madness, and Benjamin Rush, the Visionary Doctor Who Became a Founding Father* (New York: Crown Publishing, 2018); Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004); McCullough, *John Adams*.

[93] For more on the politicization of the Founding Fathers, see for example: Gordon S. Wood, *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), pp. 3-11; Michael Austin, *That's Not What They Meant!*: *Reclaiming the Founding Fathers from America's Right Wing* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2012).

[94] This homogenization can be detected in a *Guardian* review of the NMAAHC, which concludes: 'Despite some clunks, the result has a compelling, spiky otherness, standing on the Mall as *a welcome rebuke to the*

would be more fitting of this world-class institution and would help to lead America away from these binary, ahistorical paths and into the messy depths of historical reality and complexity.[95]

Moreover, given the narrative in 'The Paradox of Liberty' it is surprising that this display does not reference the nearby Washington Monument or Jefferson Memorial. Historical memorials have been the center of public debate in recent years. Rooted in disagreements about Confederate memorials, some circles have broadened their criticism to include memorials honoring Washington and Jefferson.[96] Due to this relevance and the

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world of white marble monuments to dead white men [emphasis mine].' Not only does this oversimplification of Washington, D.C. neglect some of the most popular monuments in the city (such as the Lincoln Memorial and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial) and a beautiful series of war memorials (most notably, the African American Civil War Memorial), but it also reduces men like Washington and Jefferson to 'dead white men'—dismissing their accomplishments in one fell swoop. Furthermore, this attitude counters that of Lonnie Bunch, who has repeatedly explained that the museum aims to add to (rather than take away from) the city's commemorative landscape by 'telling the American story through an African American lens'. Bunch considers surrounding museums to be partners in telling the American story through various perspectives: 'Each of these museums…there are different portals into what it means to be an American. And so for me, it really never was to say, "all things are African American in the building," but rather, "Here are different ways to tell the story." We expect that the American Art Museum might tell their story a little differently, and that's all for the good.' Bunch has said elsewhere that he considers the Smithsonian museums in Washington, D.C. not as competitors but as partners. He notes that he 'knew that the story of America is too big for one building.' Therefore, he writes: 'The Smithsonian does something no other museum complex can: opens different portals for the public to enter the American experience, be it through the Smithsonian American Art Museum, or the National Air and Space Museum, or the National Museum of the American Indian. The portal we're opening will allow for a more complicated—and more complete—understanding of this country.' The museum's purpose, then, is not to 'rebuke dead white men', but rather to challenge inaccurate historical narratives and add new voices to the nation's multi-faceted history. See: Oliver Wainwright, '"A welcome rebuke to dead white men": The Smithsonian's African American museum finally arrives', *The Guardian* (16 September 2016) <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/sep/15/smithsonian-national-museum-african-american-history-washington-architecture-review> [accessed on 15 October 2018]; Ally Schweitzer, 'Lonnie Bunch On Telling "The American Story Through An African American Lens"', *WAMU* (16 August 2016) <https://wamu.org/story/16/08/16/interview_lonnie_bunch_african_american_museum/> [accessed on 19 October 2018]; Bunch, 'The Definitive Story of How the National Museum of African American History and Culture Came to Be'.

[95] Representing complexity is excellently achieved in other areas of the NMAAHC and, for this reason, there is hope that the portrayal of the Founding Fathers may improve in coming years. In fact, Lonnie Bunch has expressed his commitment to complexity: '[O]ur goal ought not to be to find the simple frameworks, but to help the public embrace ambiguity. If we could really help the public embrace ambiguity and be comfortable with nuance, what a contribution we'd make to this country!' See: Ryan P. Smith, 'Lonnie Bunch Looks Back on the Making of the Smithsonian's Newest Museum', *Smithsonian Magazine* (9 November 2017) <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/museum-director-lonnie-bunch-looks-back-year-one-making-smithsonians-newest-museum-180967173/> [accessed on 19 October 2018].

[96] Max Greenwood, 'George Washington's Virginia church taking down his memorial', *The Hill* (27 October 2017) <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/357608-george-washingtons-virginia-church-taking-down-his-memorial> [accessed on 22 March 2018]; David Ng, 'Jefferson Memorial, Confederate statues enter national race debate', *Los Angeles Times* (24 June 2015)

location of the NMAAHC, curators could use an NMAAHC displays to insert a new dynamic into the national conversation. If this occurs, however, one would hope that its content would not echo the problematic narrative of 'The Paradox of Liberty', but rather that it would initiate an authentic, balanced, and honest discussion about the complexities and challenges of historical commemoration.

While the NMAAHC's depiction of the period is problematic, curators should be commended for introducing the topic to visitors. The early sectional crisis played a central role in the nation's founding—as such, it is important that visitors understand the 'Paradox of Liberty' while also learning about the varied attitudes toward the institution by the Founding Fathers. While the ISM should not be expected to cover such an American-focused discussion, the omission of this topic at the DuSable has no such excuse.[97] Early tensions over slavery elongate the sectional crisis, teaching visitors that debates between abolitionists and apologists began much earlier than 1820 and resulted in a nation that was precariously unified in the 1780s. By omitting this information, the DuSable dismisses the importance of the slavery debate's earliest manifestations in America and fails to challenge the misrepresentation of the Founding Fathers as a slave-supporting and homogenous group. Incorporating at least one display addressing these issues would greatly benefit the DuSable's narrative and introduce visitors to these significant topics.

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/culture/la-et-cm-thomas-jefferson-confederate-statues-20150624-story.html> [accessed on 22 March 2018]; Dartunorro Clark, 'Statues of Washington, Jefferson Aren't "Next," But It's Complicated, Historians Say', *NBC News* (18 August 2017) <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/statues-washington-jefferson-aren-t-next-it-s-complicated-historians-n793971> [accessed on 22 March 2018].

[97] To be clear, the ISM does include some discussion of British abolitionism, but it does not engage with the early sectional crisis in America's founding period.

America's classical sectional crisis began in the late 1820s and culminated in the 1861 outbreak of the Civil War. During this time the North and South became staunchly opposed to one another and a battle raged between abolitionists and apologists. For museums representing African-American history, it is important to teach visitors about the sectional crisis to contextualize the Civil War and its legacy. Museological representations of the classical sectional crisis can educate visitors about the growing tension between North and South, events that escalated this tension, the relationship between black and white abolitionists, and the ways that apologists defended the institution of slavery. The ISM and NMAAHC engage with the classical sectional crisis, largely using the lenses of multi-racialism, abolitionist leaders, and movement marketing to explore the period.

When representing the sectional crisis, museums can produce more comprehensive narrative when the multi-racial approach to abolitionism is highlighted.[98] This element is only included in the NMAAHC displays, and even here it is sometimes a problematic aspect of the sectional crisis narrative. While most placards addressing this issue accentuate black and white partnerships in abolitionism, one placard reads: 'Together, enslaved and free, African Americans organized to overthrow slavery.' With the exception of the single placard that may oversimplify the issue, the narrative largely emphasizes the African-American role in the abolitionist movement whilst also highlighting multi-racial efforts to end slavery. These alliances are particularly clear in a display in which three placards explore one black-white partnership each (Gerrit Smith and Frederick Douglass;

[98] For more on multi-racial approaches to abolitionism, see for example: Jean Fagan Yellin, *Women and Sisters: The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Bruce Mills, 'Lydia Maria Child and the Endings to Harriet Jacobs' Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl', *American Literature* 64.2 (1992), 255-272; John Stauffer, *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Mischa Honeck, 'August Willich, Peter H. Clark, and the Abolitionist Movement in Cincinnati'. In Larry A. Greene and Anke Ortlepp (eds), *Germans and African Americans: Two Centuries of Exchange* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010), 17-36; Nilgun Anadolu-Okur, *Dismantling Slavery: Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, and Formation of the Abolitionist Discourse, 1841-1851* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2016); David Blight, *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018).

Lydia Maria Child and Harriet Jacobs; John Quincy Adams and Joseph Cinquez).[99] Highlighting these types of relationships strengthens the NMAAHC narrative and reframes the sectional crisis as a battle between ideologies rather than a battle between races—demonstrating an important lesson that can be applied to modern activism.[100]

The exploration of multi-racial partnerships is an effective way for museums to explore abolitionism. This approach retains the nuance of the period and challenges the misconception that 19th century America was divided solely by race rather than racial ideology (a subtle but important difference). Because of this topic's importance, it is surprising that the ISM and the DuSable do not do more to address it. While the ISM engages with abolitionism briefly (which will be explored later in this section), an inclusion of this particular theme would improve visitors' understanding of the period, leading them away from the division of history into binary categories that inflexibly link good with black and bad with white.[101] The DuSable, as already stated, would benefit from any inclusion of the section crisis; however, because the museum's narrative tends to neglect multi-racial activism more generally, the inclusion of this particular theme—but

[99] Frederick Douglass, a former slave who became a leading abolitionist, and Gerrit Smith, a wealthy New York landowner, formed a friendship and partnership in the late 1840s. The two ultimately merged their abolitionist newspapers—Douglass' *The North Star* and Smith's *Liberty Party Paper*—to create *Frederick Douglass' Paper* in 1851. Harriet Jacobs, a former slave who became a significant abolitionist voice, partnered with white abolitionist and women's rights activist Lydia Maria Child in the writing and publication of Jacob's memoir *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Joseph Cinquez (also known as Joseph Cinqué) led the revolt on *La Amistad* and was later defended in court by former president John Quincy Adams.

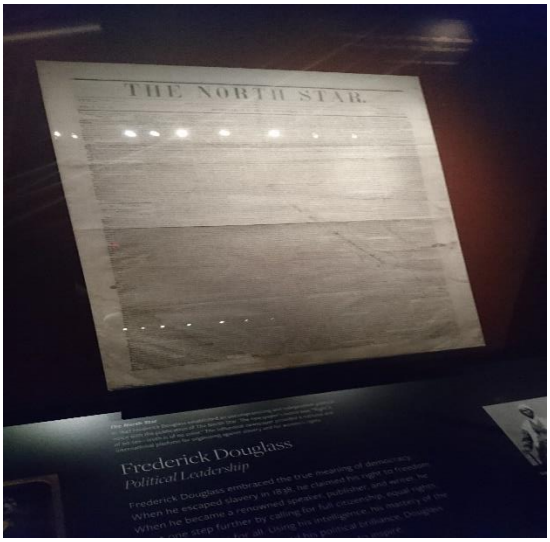
[100] It would also be appropriate to discuss the complexities of these relationships. While they were important bonds that produced impactful results, there were also strains in some of these alliances. Accentuating both the highs and the lows of these dynamics would provide visitors with a complex and comprehensive account of an important topic. These complexities have been discussed most prominently in biographies of Frederick Douglass (when exploring his relationship with William Lloyd Garrison). See for example: William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991); David Blight, *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018).

[101] Given the background of slavery education in Britain, it is understandable why the narrative emphasizes black abolitionism. Until recent decades, what little slavery education students received focused almost exclusively on white abolitionists, minimizing or even omitting black contributions to the movement. For more on the ways that slavery education has evolved with time in Britain, see for example: Beech, 'The Marketing of Slavery Heritage in the United Kingdom'; Seaton, 'Sources of Slavery-Destinations of Slavery'.

with an overall emphasis on black abolitionism in order to keep the focus on African Americans—may balance its focus.

Another approach in the representation of the sectional crisis is a focus on the leaders of the period—a lens utilized by the ISM and NMAAHC. An overview of these individuals, their ideologies, and their accomplishments humanizes the movement and connects 21st century museum visitors to these 19th century figures. The ISM pays homage to figures like Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, and Olaudah Equiano on *Legacy's* 'Black Achievers Wall'. This display includes brief descriptions of each figure and considers them within a broad framework of black achievement throughout the history of the Atlantic world. The NMAAHC also uses the lens of leading abolitionists to examine the period, though it does so within the historical context of the sectional crisis. This is executed most effectively through a series of placards that connects abolitionist leaders to various ideologies (Frederick Douglass' placard is entitled 'Political Leadership', William Lloyd Garrison's 'Immediate Abolition', and Sojourner Truth's 'Black Feminism'). An artifact collection accompanying this information—including a 19th century edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, an original copy of Douglass' newspaper *The North Star*, Garrison's pocket watch, and a bloody map that was reportedly in David Hoyt's breast pocket when he was killed while confronting a proslavery mob—helps to further humanize these figures.[102]

[102] David Hoyt (b. unknown; d. 1856) was an abolitionist who was murdered by proslavery advocates in the 'Bleeding Kansas' confrontations (1854-1861) following the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854.



The North Star, NMAAHC

David Hoyt's map, NMAAHC

The focus on individual leaders strengthens ISM and NMAAHC displays and aligns with the institutions' broader focuses on black greatness throughout history; however, when applied to movements like abolitionism (and later, civil rights activism), it is important to strike a cautious balance between leaders and ordinary people in order to authentically represent the period. A narrative that over-emphasizes fame can neglect the work of activists and organizers in a movement, giving the impression that socio-political movements are defined by well-known national leaders rather than grassroots efforts. In this case, the focus on great abolitionist leaders like Douglass, Garrison, and Truth—all of whom deserve to be spotlighted—may be better balanced by a similar display acknowledging the accomplishments of those whose names have succumbed to the erasing process of history. Organizers of abolitionist meetings and rallies, workers at abolitionist newspapers, lesser-known abolitionist authors, and many others provided the resources and support to move the anti-slavery cause forward; as such, their inclusion in museum displays alongside national leaders would present a more authentic narrative that does not prioritize fame over passion.

While the NMAAHC's engagement with diversity within abolitionist ideology is a great starting point, there is a missed opportunity to engage further with this topic. The

ideological placards provide a potential jumping off point for curators to discuss other variations in abolitionism. For example, curators could insert more complexity into the narrative by incorporating the debate over colonization. This would teach visitors about varying reasons for anti-slavery sentiments—some of which were not moral or racially progressive. This conversation could highlight key events within this period, like the forming of the American Colonization Society or the founding of Liberia. Thus, while visitors will learn about important topics like political leadership, immediate abolition, and black feminism in the current format, injecting nuance into the narrative by explaining the different motivations behind anti-slavery sentiment would present the movement more authentically.

Despite the difficulty of striking this balance, incorporating abolitionist leaders and their ideologies into sectional crisis displays is beneficial for museum visitors. Because of its engagement with this intersection, NMAAHC visitors are encouraged to understand the depth of the movement and the variety in abolitionist thought. Displays that favor the diversity of ideas instead of the simpler monolithic historical interpretation that often dominates historical memory tend to be more authentic and impactful. While the ISM effectively highlights black abolitionists, further engagement with the ideological aspect of this theme would incorporate more layers to the anti-slavery narrative. The 'Black Achievers Wall' offers a possible starting point for this inclusion and, if appendaged to this particular display, the museum could continue its characteristic approach of examining black thought throughout history. Unlike the ISM and NMAAHC, the DuSable does not explore the sectional crisis at all; however, engaging with this theme would invite visitors into the abolitionist narrative through the representation of well-known figures, which then provides an opportunity to introduce them to lesser-known (but equally important) individuals and ideas.

In addition to examining the sectional crisis through the lenses of multi-racial alliances and abolitionist leaders, museums also tend to engage with the ways that abolitionists marketed the movement. The NMAAHC and ISM approach the marketing of abolitionism through material culture and literature.[103] The ISM focuses primarily on displaying household goods like a porcelain sugar bowl, plates, a rolling pin, a cup, and silver sugar scoops, many of which include inscriptions like 'Freedom of August', 'Health To The Sick, Honour to The Brave, Success To The Lover, And Freedom To The Slave', and 'Slavery Abolished in the British Colonies 1st 8m, 1834'.[104] The NMAAHC also displays anti-slavery goods, including an enamelled patch box, an ink blotter, and two 'Am I not a man and a brother?' containers, while a nearby placard further explains the use of household goods to promote abolitionism.

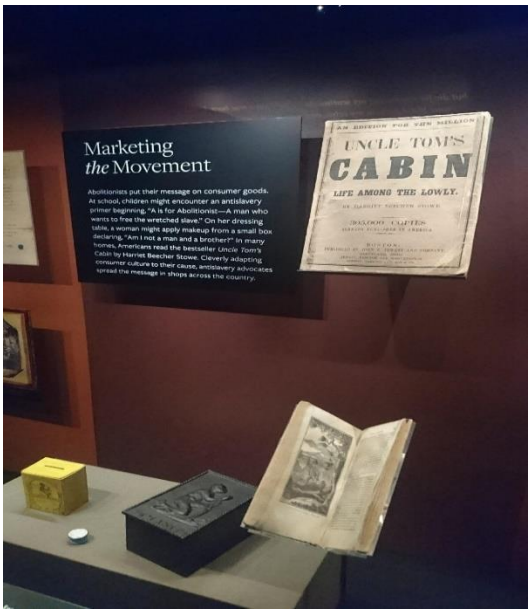
The NMAAHC also engages with the role of literature in the marketing of abolitionism.[105] The museum's abolition narrative benefits from the inclusion of Frederick Douglass' *My Bondage and My Freedom*, an edition of Douglass' *The North Star*, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and George Bourne's *Picture of Slavery in the*

[103] For more on the role of material culture (and the visual images used on those items) in the abolitionist movement, see for example: Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America 1780-1865* (London: Routledge, 1999); Sam Margolin, '"And Freedom to the Slave": Anti-Slavery Ceramics, 1787-1865'. In Robert Hunter (ed.), *Ceramics in America 2002* (Milwaukee: Chipstone Foundation, 2002); Stephan Lenik and Christer Petley, 'The Material Cultures of Slavery and Abolition in the British Caribbean', *Slavery and Abolition* 35.3 (2014), 389-398; Martha J. Cutter, *The Illustrated Slave: Empathy, Graphic Narrative, and the Visual Culture of the Transatlantic Abolition Movement, 1800-1852* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017). This can be contrasted with literature exploring how material culture has been used to reinforce racial stereotypes. See for example: Kenneth W. Goings, *Mammy and Uncle Mose: Black Collectibles and American Stereotyping* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994); Patricia A. Turner, *Ceramic Uncles and Celluloid Mammies: Black Images and Their Influences on Culture* (New York: Anchor Books, 1994).

[104] Though household items are the focus at the ISM display, other items—such as figurines, tokens, and medals—are incorporated in this display as well.

[105] For more on the role of literature in the sectional crisis, see for example: Sarah Meer, *Uncle Tom Mania: Slavery, Minstrelsy, and Transatlantic Culture in the 1850s* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005); Joy Jordan-Lake, *Whitewashing Uncle Tom's Cabin: Nineteenth-Century Women Novelists Respond to Stowe* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005); Kerry Sinanan, 'The Slave Narrative and the Literature of Abolition'. In Audrey Fisch (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the African American Slave Narrative* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 28-42; David S. Reynolds, *Mightier Than the Sword: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Battle for America* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2011); Barbara Hochman, *Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Reading Revolution: Race, Literacy, Childhood, and Fiction, 1851-1911* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011).

United States of America.[106] While these items are fascinating inclusions in the abolitionist display at NMAAHC, there is not enough information about the role of literature in the sectional crisis—an extensive topic that would fit comfortably into the display; however, the NMAAHC should be credited for including this topic at all. Because the intellectual debate over slavery is well documented in antebellum literature—for example, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* resulted in an entire sub-genre of responses in what would become known as anti-Tom novels—the other museums in this study could better incorporate the slavery debate by following the lead of the NMAAHC and engaging further with this significant literature.[107]



'Marketing the Movement' display, NMAAHC

By taking these different approaches, the NMAAHC and ISM abolitionist displays demonstrate the ways that this topic can be considered, as well as the benefits to teaching

[106] Frederick Douglass' abolitionist newspaper *The North Star* ran from 1847 to 1860 (from 1851 to 1860 it was renamed *Frederick Douglass' Paper* after a merger with the Gerrit Smith's *Liberty Party Paper*). See: Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855); Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Boston: John P. Jewett & Company, 1852); George Bourne, *Picture of Slavery in the United States of America* (Middletown: Edwin Hunt, 1834).

[107] For more on anti-Tom novels, see Stephen Railton's *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture: A Multi-Media Archive*. In addition to a rich collection of resources and information about proslavery and antislavery literature, Railton has also included digitized transcripts from most of the anti-Tom novels. See: 'Anti Uncle Tom Novels', *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture: A Multi-Media Archive* <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/proslav/antitoms.html> [accessed on 3 November 2018].

visitors about marketing and publicizing the movement. Despite the varied narratives, both museums place an emphasis on the intersection between material culture and activism—an important theme that transcends the antebellum era. While visitors may be used to modern political sentiments printed on clothing, hats, or bumper stickers, they may be surprised to learn that in the 19th century people pledged their loyalty to political causes through these types of household goods. Items like the sugar bowl and spoons in the ISM were particularly powerful abolitionist pieces in Britain, speaking to the direct connection between the slaves in the Americas and the sugar in British pantries; similarly, books and *The North Star* on display at the NMAAHC represent the central role of literature during the American sectional crisis, a period that produced a wave of newspapers, journals, and novels reflecting proslavery and abolitionist ideas.[108]

Abolitionist display, ISM

True to its name, the ISM achieves something unique in its display that is not replicated in the NMAAHC. Because the descriptions of some ISM items indicate that they

[108] By conveying these household items—particularly the sugar bowl—the ISM display emphasizes the contrast between self-interest and abolition. This is a theme that continues in the final displays in *Legacy*, which identify modern issues such as human trafficking and working conditions in foreign factories that produce cheap goods for British buyers.

come from both Britain and the United States, the display ties together American and British abolitionist sentiments, highlighting the parallels and camaraderie between the two groups.[109] This display would be even stronger if this connection was more overtly acknowledged in an annotation, but it is still an interesting comparison for visitors. The use of British and American anti-slavery goods continues the international theme established throughout the museum's galleries while also stressing the interconnectedness of the abolitionist cause in the Atlantic world—particularly between these two nations. This alternative perspective in the ISM exemplifies the importance of transatlantic museum comparisons and serves as a reminder that the search for museological historical understanding should include multiple museums and their institution-unique narratives.[110] NMAAHC visitors, meanwhile, miss out on this international perspective and, in doing so, fail to appreciate transatlantic connections that were so prominent during the abolitionist movement.

[109] For more on transatlantic ties in the abolitionist movement, see for example: John Blassingame, et al. (eds), *The Frederick Douglass Papers: Series One—Speeches, Debates, and Interviews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 215, cites Frederick Douglass, 'British Influence on the Abolition Movement in America: An Address Delivered in Paisley, Scotland, On 17 April 1847', *Renfrewshire Advertiser* (25 April 1846); Fionnghuala Sweeney and Alan Rice, 'Liberating Sojourns? African Americans and Transatlantic Abolition 1845-1865', *Slavery and Abolition* 33.2 (2012), 181-189; David Brown, 'William Lloyd Garrison, Transatlantic Abolitionism and Colonisation in the Mid Nineteenth Century: The Revival of the Peculiar Solution?', *Slavery and Abolition* 33.2 (2012), 233-250; W. Caleb McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy in the Age of Slavery: Garrisonian Abolitionists and Transatlantic Reform* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013); J. R. Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism in the Age of Revolution: An International History of Anti-slavery, c. 1787-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Jonathan Daniel Wells, 'Charles Dickens, the American South, and the Transatlantic Debate over Slavery', *Slavery and Abolition* 36.1 (2015), 1-25; Hannah-Rose Murray, 'A "Negro Hercules": Frederick Douglass' Celebrity in Britain', *Celebrity Studies* 7.2 (2016), 264-279.

[110] The ISM's transatlantic focus in this section provides the opportunity to discuss issues like slave owner compensation in the Caribbean, a significant topic given the sizable West Indian heritage and ancestry in Black British communities. As of the last census in 2011, there were 873,000 UK born and 992,000 non-UK born 'Black/African/Caribbean/Black British' people; of this group, the largest subgroup was of Caribbean descent, which contributed 358,000 and 237,000 people to the broader figures, respectively. See: '2011 Census Analysis: Ethnicity and Religion of the Non-UK Born Population in England and Wales', *Office of National Statistics* <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/2011censusanalysisethnicityandreligionofthenonukbornpopulationinenglandandwales/2015-06-18> [accessed on 2 November 2018].

EXPANDING NARRATIVES

There was one component that seemed to be missing from the sectional crisis displays in all of these institutions. Despite engagement with the sectional crisis and the abolitionist movement, extensive proslavery resources remain untapped by these museums. This seems reminiscent of the underexplored topic of 20th century segregationists in both historiography (until recent years) and museological representations of the era. As historian Charles W. Eagles writes about these 20th century omissions:

> *In [recent decades] historians have generally ignored whites, and particularly the powerful white resistance. With a few exceptions…scholars seem to have assumed that little remains to be learned about the segregationists or that they are simply too unattractive or unimportant to warrant examination.*[111]

In a similar vein, further museological exploration of proslavery thought would greatly benefit visitors' understanding of the era.

Understandably, there are valid concerns about including this information in museum displays. As outlined in the 'Museum Backgrounds' chapter, African-American history museums are currently operating amid a tense cultural-political climate. With the public discourse often being dominated by racially-related topics—in recent years this has included President Obama's nationality, Black Lives Matter, Confederate monuments, and NFL protests—many racists seem to be emboldened and hate crime figures have spiked. As a result, there is a possibility that the incorporation of proslavery ideology in public spaces could feed into 21st century racism, potentially leading to dangerous consequences or providing legitimacy to current racist ideas.

With these concerns in mind, it is important to note that museums hold unique positions within public spaces. Museums offer space that is not available at monuments,

[111] Charles W. Eagles, 'Toward New Histories of the Civil Rights Era', *The Journal of Southern History* 66.4 (2000) 815-848 (p. 840).

tangibility that is not replicable in books, and accessibility that is not possible at universities. Though curators cannot control how visitors interpret information or how that knowledge is later utilized, the intellectual and broad nature of history museums offers the opportunity to examine nuanced historical ideas within a space that can be contextualized by other relevant information. Consequently, if approached with awareness, sensitivity, and caution, controversial topics can be appropriately dissected in museum displays in ways that is not possible in other public or intellectual spaces.

Similarly, if curators are concerned that examining the proslavery movement could be misinterpreted as condoning these apologist theories, then we can turn to the words of historian David Donald who reminds readers that it is no longer necessary to discuss the validity of proslavery ideology, which has long been discounted by scholars and has 'approximately the same scientific standing as astrology or alchemy.'[112] Thus, if displays engage with this line of reasoning, making it clear to visitors that the defenses being presented are all morally and factually abhorrent, then the institutions could explain how apologists justified their support of slavery—both to themselves and others.

Though there are societal risks with the presentation of antebellum ideas, there are intellectual and societal benefits from this inclusion. Apologist defenses included scientific, religious, historical, societal, and legal arguments—all of which would offer a more nuanced and comprehensive portrayal of the antebellum era. Moreover, this discussion could also prompt displays examining the dehumanizing or corrupting influence of slavery on white Americans—another neglected topic in the museological representation of slavery. Thus, however invalid apologist arguments were, it is essential for historians, curators, and museum visitors to grasp the motivations behind them in order to better understand the mind set of proslavery advocates, their abolitionist counterparts, and the

[112] David Donald, 'The Proslavery Argument Reconsidered', *The Journal of Southern History*, 37:1 (1971) 3-18 (p. 3).

subsequent white segregationists of the 20th century. Learning about these topics intellectually, in turn, can have a positive impact on visitors' understanding of modern forms of racism, how it is justified, and—most importantly—how it can be combatted.

In addition to the omission of proslavery ideology, the museums in this study also miss opportunities to connect themes in the abolitionist narrative to later manifestations of these historical elements. For example, many abolitionists—like Douglass, Stowe, Truth, and Garrison—linked abolitionism with support for women's and workers' rights. Outside of Sojourner Truth's 'Black Feminism' placard in the NMAAHC, these connections between causes go unnoticed in the museum displays. Moreover, these same parallels arise again when there was an overlap of activism for civil rights, feminism, and labor rights in the progressive era and in the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, these museums are not only missing the opportunity to connect activism within a single era, but they also fail to link recurring activist movements throughout history.

Similarly, there are many comparisons to be made between abolitionism and 20th century equality struggles. Abolitionism was a movement dominated by white leaders and racial tension sometimes aggravated anti-slavery efforts. The racial struggle that occurred when white leaders controlled groups working for black rights is something that continued into the 20th century in the NAACP and other civil rights organizations. Comparisons can also be made between Douglass' break from Garrison to the division within civil rights groups and the rise of the black power era. In both instances, multi-racial approaches to equality reached breaking points, giving way instead to more segregated efforts. These topics would lend themselves well to museum displays, where visitors walking through the museum's chronologically-ordered exhibits will subsequently learn about 20th century movements. Though it does not happen often, it is important for museums to break the chronological barrier to highlight thematic arcs that transcend a singular era and recur throughout history.

CONCLUSION

When museums engage with the sectional crisis, they have a responsibility to present a balanced view of the precursor to a period that remains contentious in American political discourse. An effective engagement with this period starts with an elongated timeline, extending the classical years of 1820-1861 to include their late 18th century roots. The inclusion of this earlier period allows museums to juxtapose slavery and freedom during the nation's founding years—a contrast that angered many early Americans and laid the foundation for increased abolitionist sentiment in the antebellum era. Moreover, this extension gives museums the opportunity to de-politicize and challenge misunderstandings about the historical narrative concerning the Founding Fathers and their attitudes toward slavery. The classical stage of the sectional crisis is more frequently examined in black history museums; however, the tendency to focus almost entirely on abolitionism rather than proslavery ideology is a missed opportunity resulting in inauthentic narratives that present an unbalanced view of antebellum America. Despite this, abolitionism—most often explored through lenses of multi-racialism, abolitionists and ideologies, and movement marketing—rightly holds a central position in displays examining America's sectional crisis.

THE CIVIL WAR

INTRODUCTION

The culmination of the sectional crisis occurred in 1861 when the South declared independence from the Union and the American Civil War began. Though modern Americans are several eras removed from this national divide, recent debates over Confederate memorials and flags have resuscitated Lost Cause arguments made by Confederate apologists. Moreover, the ways that the Lost Cause has been utilized by the rise of the Alt-Right has further refocused the nation's attention on the Civil War.[113] Considering the lingering passions on either side of the Civil War debate in modern American political discourse, it is interesting to observe how this 150-year tension is explored in museums. Given its continuing relevancy, it is particularly important that black history museums authentically represent the period while linking the historical narrative to subsequent and modern debates. When this is achieved, displays will provide not only an understanding of America's most divided chapter, but they will also connect that understanding to 21st century manifestations of Civil War discourse. In this study, effective Civil War representation will be measured against the DuSable's 'Red, White, Blue & Black' exhibit and NMAAHC's Civil War displays in *Slavery and Freedom* and *Double Victory*.

[113] Madison Park, 'Why white nationalists are drawn to Charlottesville', *CNN* (12 August 2017) <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/11/us/charlottesville-white-nationalists-rally-why/index.html> [accessed on 26 March 2018]; Dara Lind, 'Unite the Right, the violent white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, explained', *Vox* (14 August 2017) <https://www.vox.com/2017/8/12/16138246/charlottesville-nazi-rally-right-uva> [accessed on 26 March 2018].

CONTEXTUALIZING MODERN DEBATES

The cause of the Civil War is still hotly debated in American cultural-political discourse, so it is valuable when black history museums examine the dynamic between slavery and states' rights in the years leading up to 1861. Moreover, because these modern debates tend to fall along party lines, museums have the platform to challenge politically-motivated views of history that are neither accurate nor responsible. The DuSable and NMAAHC each address the war's origins, though there is a significant disparity in the extent to which the topic is dissected. The DuSable's Civil War display sums up this complex historical narrative in a single sentence: 'The institution of slavery, or more directly a state's right to govern itself and choose to preserve chattel slavery, was the main reason behind the dissolution of the Union…'. Some detail is missing (which is to be expected in a brief display) when the placard teaches visitors that seven southern states broke from the Union in 1861 without clarifying that this break was a direct result of the 1860 election. By contrast, the NMAAHC details the secession extensively in a display called 'A Nation Divided'. Unlike its DuSable counterpart, this larger display dedicates more space to the final years of the sectional crisis, highlighting the tensions within the country during the election of 1860.

These two displays stand in stark opposition to one another. The DuSable's display presents an oversimplified historical narrative, reducing the entirety of the war's origins to one sentence. Then, by failing to connect southern secession to Lincoln's election in 1860, the DuSable misses the opportunity to differentiate a South that seceded because of states' rights from a South that seceded because it was unhappy with election results—the latter being detrimental to a healthy democratic nation. By including information about the Union's dissolution alongside quotations and artifacts from Alexander Stephens and Jefferson Davis, 'A Nation Divided' expands the discussion beyond the limitations of the DuSable's display. This disparity in detail demonstrates the importance of embracing

complex topics to help visitors understand the historical (and, in turn, the modern) importance of America's most defining moments. In fact, the modern significance of this topic is precisely *why* it is vital that history museums embrace its complexities. Because Americans remain divided on the Civil War—and because those divisions primarily center on the war's causes—museum displays addressing this era have the ability to replace falsehoods littering the public debate with historical truths. In this way, expanding the DuSable's Civil War display to include a more nuanced discussion about the war's origins would not only improve the museum's narrative quality, but would also contribute to impactful cultural-political debates that continue to divide Americans.[114]

CREATING BALANCED WARTIME NARRATIVES

When museologically representing the Civil War, it makes sense to center the display on the militaries and soldiers involved. The DuSable and NMAAHC both take this approach, placing the primary emphasis of their displays on African-American soldiers.[115] While its engagement with the Civil War is briefer than its NMAAHC counterpart, the DuSable Civil War display effectively explores the role of African Americans in the military, emphasizing the white resistance to integrated military units and the creation of the Bureau of Colored Troops in 1863. In the NMAAHC, both Civil War displays (in *Slavery and Freedom* and *Double Victory*) also center on black troops and units. Here, visitors will learn about the achievements of black soldiers, the United States Colored Troops, conditions on the battlefield, the struggle for equal pay, and the accomplishments of black

[114] It is even more important for institutions of knowledge to correct misinformation amid periods characterized by the politically-motivated blurring of fact and fiction.

[115] For more on African-American soldiers in the Civil War, see for example: James M. McPherson, *Negro's Civil War: How American Negroes Felt and Acted During the War for the Union* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965); Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York: Free Press, 1990); John David Smith (ed.), *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004); William A. Dobak, *Freedom by the Sword: The U.S. Colored Troops, 1862-1867* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2011).

regiments. In both institutions, annotations are surrounded by corresponding artifacts, including weapons, photographs, and flags, which further bring this period to life.

The centering of the narrative on black soldiers in the DuSable and NMAAHC is fitting and places emphases on some of the most significant aspects of the war. Examples of black courage, patriotism, and military prowess—themes outlined at both institutions—are empowering stories that will inspire visitors. Moreover, it is particularly important for history museums to represent black military efforts to highlight the contradiction of black soldiers risking their lives for a nation that did not reciprocate this loyalty. Exploring this dynamic connects military and political history, allowing curators to redirect visitor attention toward the frustration of African-American soldiers—a cumulative disillusionment that translated into political momentum in the 20th century. At times, these discussions can even break the fourth wall; for example, it was African-American Civil War veterans and their families who first demanded that a monument be erected in Washington, D.C. to honor black veterans in 1915—the origins of the NMAAHC itself. Unfortunately, neither the NMAAHC nor DuSable use their focus on black military achievements as a jumping off point for these stories, but there are possibilities for future display growth. Further engagement with these issues at the DuSable and NMAAHC would highlight the struggle between racism, activism, and patriotism while outlining how this struggle manifested itself during different historical eras.

Though opportunities to celebrate African-American military contributions are important, there is a risk of focusing too much on sensationalism. As with any war narrative in museums, it is tempting to prioritize more 'exciting' aspects of the war (the battles and the bloodshed) over the more mundane routine of camp life. Both the DuSable and NMAAHC sometimes sensationalize their war narratives, neglecting ordinary elements of soldiers' experiences. Moreover, the majority of Civil War casualties were due to disease, illness, or infection—topics that do not get a considerable amount of attention in

these museum displays. Thus, while battles and fighting should be thoroughly examined in Civil War displays, it is also important to reject sensationalism by incorporating other aspects of military life and, by doing so, present authentic representations of the period to visitors.

In addition to the militaristic aspects of the Civil War, it is also important for museums to engage with the non-combat contributions of African Americans during the war years. This theme is absent from the DuSable's *Red, White, Blue & Black*, but is a primary focus in the NMAAHC's *Slavery and Freedom*. Among the non-combat topics covered in the NMAAHC Civil War displays, particular attention is given to tent cities, the role of black women during the war, and Frederick Douglass' influence on President Abraham Lincoln. These displays provide relief to visitors who may not have a strong interest in military history, and, as such, they serve as a reminder that war histories in museums should include social, political, economic, and intellectual elements of these periods to appeal to a spectrum of visitor interests. Moreover, including information about life on the home front during the Civil War prevents sensationalism that focuses only on military campaigns; instead, a narrative that weaves military and social/personal experiences conveys an authentic wartime balance to museum visitors.

Sibley tent used in tent cities, NMAAHC

The disparity between the DuSable's military-focused narrative and the NMAAHC's more expansive view of the period can partially be attributed to the inherently different narratives produced by thematic and chronological exhibits. Because the NMAAHC examines the Civil War in both a thematic gallery (*Double Victory*) and a chronological gallery (*Slavery and Freedom*), curators can incorporate multiple wartime perspectives. By contrast, the DuSable limits its examination of the war to a military-focused thematic exhibit ('Red, White, Blue & Black') without including a second engagement with the topic in its chronological exhibit ('Freedom and Resistance'). While thematic displays focused on black military achievements offer visitors an opportunity to reflect on the ways that African Americans have sacrificed for the nation, they can also result in the curatorial decision to omit these important chapters of American history from the museum's primary chronological displays. This process can result in timeline omissions in chronological galleries, as well as historical decontextualization in thematic galleries.

This is the case for the DuSable and its coverage of military history. Structured chronologically, 'Freedom and Resistance' suffers from noticeable gaps in its timeline. Despite its overall quality, neglecting wars from 'Freedom and Resistance' results in a spotty narrative; as such, the exhibit would benefit from additional content to create a consecutive, expansive narrative that examines the entirety of the African-American historical timeline. In addition to correcting omissions within the 'Freedom and Resistance' timeline, this change would also encourage a non-military examination of the period, which may result in a more authentic portrayal of the Civil War. The different ways that these two institutions approach this topic demonstrates that wartime narratives are at their highest quality when thematic and chronological structures merge to combine military

and non-military displays—a method that teaches visitors about the multi-faceted nature of America's war years.[116]

While the DuSable would benefit from adopting the NMAAHC's balanced wartime narrative, the latter displays also raise some concerns. The effectiveness of these displays depend entirely on the museum's purpose. If the displays are meant to present a thorough Civil War history that blends the traditional narrative with the black achievements that were long omitted from it, then this portion of the museum journey is unsuccessful. At times, phrasing is oversimplified—for example, explaining that the New York City Draft Riots of 1863 occurred simply because '[m]any white Americans were outraged at being required to risk their lives for African Americans' neglects the ways that class motivated these disturbances and under-explores an economic aspect that is essential to properly understanding the riots.[117] Similarly, a placard notes that though neither the North nor the South was committed to completely abolishing slavery, 'African Americans made their mission clear…[u]sing the power of the written word and a great people's movement, they demanded emancipation'—a powerful statement, though incorporating topics like the Free Soil Party may contextualize the narrative further. In these ways, while black achievements are rightly celebrated, the omission of the contributions of (and partnerships with) white abolitionists and Union soldiers results in a narrative that could be better balanced.

However, if the purpose of these displays is to focus solely on the black role in the Civil War, then they are successful. These stories of black achievement are often under-acknowledged in mainstream narratives and they are important aspects of the nation's history. The stories of these men and women teach lessons about courage, patriotism,

[116] Though this approach works well for military history, the overall museum narrative is not always improved by the combination of chronological and thematic exhibits. At times, this curatorial approach can split narratives and render some information repetitive, creating a dizzying effect.

[117] For more on the New York City Draft Riots, see for example: Adrian Cook, *The Armies of the Streets: The New York City Draft Riots of 1863* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1974); Iver Bernstein, *New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Barnet Schecter, *The Devil's Own Work: The Civil War Draft Riots and the Fight to Reconstruct America* (New York: Walker & Co., 2005).

resiliency, and pride—all of which hold meaningful connotations in both historical and modern frameworks. If this second purpose is indeed the goal of curators, the museum could improve its Civil War displays by continuing to stress multi-racial alliances—an important message amid the current political climate—and by correcting oversimplifications, thereby educating visitors about history's complexities.

ALTERNATIVE CURATORIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Despite the merits of the Civil War displays in the DuSable and NMAAHC, both institutions neglect a topic that is perhaps most relevant to our modern society. Museums representing American history, African-American history, military history, or southern history have a responsibility to educate visitors about the Lost Cause ideology that arose in the postbellum period. This mind set—a nostalgic and sympathetic view of an 'Old South' full of benevolent masters and grateful enslaved African Americans—is still prevalent in some cultural factions, as evident in recent debates over the Confederate flag and memorials. As historian William C. Davis writes: 'The growth of [the Lost Cause] mythology has been nurtured ever since [the war] thanks to the self-interest of participants, the defensiveness of their descendants, and the craving of all of us for a good story.'[118] Due to the deeply-embedded nature of this historical manipulation and its modern ramifications, it is particularly important that museums authentically and thoroughly address this topic. Positioning the modern misunderstanding into its historical context will have the dual effect of teaching visitors about this historical era while also examining the roots of current cultural-political debates. Because of these considerations, the addition of information about the Lost Cause to Civil War displays at the DuSable and NMAAHC would

[118] William C. Davis, *The Cause Lost: Myths and Realities of the Confederacy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), p. x.

contribute modern relevancy to a topic that may (mistakenly) be considered as a stagnant historical event.

In addition to this omission, there are several other missed opportunities evident at the DuSable and NMAAHC. Both institutions oversimplify some aspects of the Civil War, a process that can skew narratives by (either intentionally or unintentionally) favoring certain facts over others. For example, the display on the New York City Draft Riots at the NMAAHC fails to discuss class—a topic that would insert complexity into the Civil War narrative by highlighting varying attitudes toward slavery and the war. For example, there is room in these narratives for displays that use class to examine economically motivated attitudes toward slavery in the North, as well as the poor Confederate soldiers who had neither land nor slave to fight for in the war. Moreover, further engagement with diversity of opinion (as well as nuances and contradictions within those opinions) would introduce visitors to complexities like Lincoln's evolving views on emancipation and the language used to justify it in the Emancipation Proclamation. Whether they deal with class, complexity, or diversity in thought, these topics present powerful opportunities for curators to go beyond the traditional, oversimplified popular narrative and dive into the nuances of the past. Instead, the Civil War displays in this study sometimes adopt the strategy of oversimplification, which at best reduces the historical narrative to digestible blurbs and at worst produces a skewed, inauthentic version of historical events.

In addition to these tendencies, Civil War displays in the NMAAHC and ISM also miss the opportunity to engage with relevant historical sites near each institution.[119] Given its location, it is surprising that the NMAAHC does not connect its Civil War displays to the surrounding Virginian commemorative landscape. In addition to its proximity to nearby plantations and Confederate memorials, the NMAAHC is also close to numerous Civil

[119] Of course, there are ways that the DuSable could localize its Civil War narrative; however, given the geographic significance of Washington, D.C. and Liverpool to the Civil War, these missed opportunities are far more pronounced in the NMAAHC and ISM.

War sites including Arlington National Cemetery (6 minutes away), Manassas National Battlefield Park (35 minutes away), Harpers Ferry (1 hour 10 minutes away), Antietam National Battlefield (1 hour 30 minutes away), and Gettysburg (1 hour 30 minutes away)—as well as many others.[120] The positioning of the NMAAHC among these sites would lend itself well to a localized approach, offering curators the opportunity to utilize the museum's historically-significant location to create a unique narrative—which may be particularly appealing to out-of-town visitors who are likely to visit some of these other sites on their vacations. As the display stands now, however, there is no reference to these sites or Civil War-based heritage tourism.

The opportunity to connect a Civil War narrative with the surrounding landscape also arises for the ISM—if, of course, a Civil War section was added to *Legacy*. Some ISM visitors may be surprised to learn that despite Britain's official neutrality, Liverpool played a significant role in the American Civil War.[121] Because southern cotton fuelled Liverpool's textile factories, the region was financially motivated to assist the Confederacy and did so by providing money, naval ships, engines, arms, and ammunition. The English city even made history during the end of the war when the Confederate warship *CSS Shenandoah*, docked in Liverpool, became the last surrender of the Confederacy in November 1865.[122] This historical narrative ties Liverpool directly to America's Civil War and, as such, an expansion of the singular sentence about the war would be warranted. Rather than providing well-known facts about the war, this addition would be most original

[120] Distances are routes by road. Arlington National Cemetery is a military cemetery built on the former estate of Confederate general Robert E. Lee in the wake of the Civil War in Arlington, Virginia; Manassas National Battlefield Park is the site of the First Battle of Bull Run (July 21, 1861) and the Second Battle of Bull Run (August 28-30, 1862) in Manassas, Virginia; Antietam National Battlefield is the site of the Battle of Antietam (September 27, 1862) in Sharpsburg, Maryland; Harpers Ferry is the site of the Battle of Harpers Ferry (September 12-15, 1862) in Harpers Ferry, Maryland; Gettysburg National Military Park is the site of the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863) in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

[121] For more on Liverpool's role in the American Civil War, see: Robert Thorp, *Mersey Built: The Role of Merseyside in the American Civil War* (Wilmington: Vernon Press, 2017).

[122] For more on the *C.S.S. Shenandoah*, see for example: Lynn Schooler, *The Last Shot: The Incredible Story of the C.S.S. Shenandoah and the True Conclusion of the American Civil War* (Waterville: Thorndike Press, 2005); Tom Chaffin, *Sea of Gray: The Around-the-World Odyssey of the Confederate Raider Shenandoah* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).

if it focused instead on Liverpool's Civil War link. This may include references to sites like St George's Hall, the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool Town Hall, the Fraser & Trenholm office, and the homes of Thomas Haines Dudley or Charles K. Prioleau (all between 10 and 20 minutes away by foot except the home of Prioleau, which is a 30 minute walk).[123] Because *Legacy* is so closely tied to the surrounding commemorative landscape, including more information about the city's role in the Civil War (and linking this historical participation to modern city sites) would comfortably fit into the gallery's narrative while also further connecting narratives in the ISM and the Merseyside Maritime Museum downstairs.[124] These engagements with surrounding sites would be beneficial for visitors to both the ISM and NMAAHC, helping them draw correlations between sites of education and commemoration, and also between the past and present.

CONCLUSION

While many events in the black historical narrative are neglected or under-examined in other types of American history museums, the Civil War is rarely overlooked in representations of the past. These years of strife—the only time in which the country's chronic tensions succeeded in fracturing the Union—were transformative for a young nation. Such an impactful era has relevancy far beyond its years, which is why museologically representing the Civil War requires an appreciation for the inseparable

[123] In 1864 a 'Southern Bazaar' was organized by the Leading Ladies of Liverpool at St George's Hall to raise money (£20,000) for Confederate prisoners of war; President of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis stayed at the Adelphia Hotel in 1868, and President/Union general Ulysses S. Grant stayed here in 1877; During Grant's trip he was received at a civic reception at Liverpool's Town Hall; Fraser, Trenholm and Co was a commercial house based in Charleston, South Carolina, and its Liverpool firm made significant economic contributions to the Confederacy during the war; Thomas Haines Dudley served as the US consul in Liverpool and worked toward preventing British intervention during the Civil War; Charles K. Prioleau, a cotton merchant raised in Charleston, was a senior partner at Fraser, Trenholm and Co where he organized and oversaw Confederate interests in Britain.

[124] The Maritime Museum has a model and painting of the *USS Alabama* and is home to an archival collection documenting Liverpool's involvement in the American Civil War. This collection was combined with collections from the Maritime Archives and Library and the ISM to produce a National Museums Liverpool display commemorating the 150th anniversary of the war from 2011 to 2015.

relationship between the past and present. Understanding the lingering tension in the nation is crucial for curators when creating museum displays, and these tensions will highlight the areas that are most important for museums to examine. The origins of the war and, later, the development of the Lost Cause are important inclusions in effective Civil War displays. Moreover, attention should be paid to authentically—rather than accurately—presenting the period. An authentic representation of the Civil War requires a narrative that rejects homogeneity and oversimplification in favor of diversity and complexity, while also incorporating the mundane (non-combat) aspects of the era in tandem with the more dramatic (combat) elements. Though representing this era is difficult given its lingering contentiousness, as institutions of knowledge museums bear the responsibility of reconciling the past with the present—particularly when modern society is struggling to do so.

CONCLUSION

One of the core themes throughout this chapter has been the tension between accuracy and authenticity in museum representation. The temptation to present narratives that are accurate but not authentic—and, as a result, more entertaining—can be particularly strong when representing histories that are naturally more dramatic, like slavery and the Civil War. At times the most 'entertaining' aspects of these narratives receive the most attention, while ordinary experiences are neglected. In the ISM, NMAAHC, and DuSable, visitors will learn about topics like violence, revolts, and Civil War military campaigns—a focus on the spectacular elements of this period that, while accurate, do not authentically convey the era. None of these institutions leave their narratives entirely unbalanced, however. The ISM balances its emphasis on violence with an examination of the less tangible dehumanization of slavery; the NMAAHC tempers its focus on key figures with the introduction of ordinary people, groups, and towns; and the DuSable couples its focus on retribution and revolt with displays on working experiences. Thus, while the tendency to entertain is apparent in these institutions, curators have also provided information about the mundane and the non-famous to more authentically engage with the period.

Each of these museums, however, could improve within its own framework. The ISM excels at highlighting dehumanization and loss of identity, and there is room for further examination into the psychological impact of slavery. This may be achieved, for example, by expanding the individual accounts that are already incorporated in some displays to engage more with ordinary people and their stories. The NMAAHC also succeeds in engaging with the emotional impact of slavery—in fact, there is much more attention paid to the emotional trauma experienced by enslaved people than the physical violence of the period—and its examination of daily life and culture precludes an overly-sensationalized narrative. The physical and mental toll of ordinary work days, however, could be further engaged with, and the space and the resources available to the NMAAHC

could produce creative approaches to this difficult, intangible topic. The DuSable has a good starting point in the examination of enslaved work lives, but this would be more effectively balanced by a further assessment of the cultures that arose in ordinary slave communities. This change would help the museum better educate visitors about the development of slave cultures and communities while also fitting into the tighter restrictions of budget and space.

While an increased engagement with the ordinary and non-famous tends to produce the most authentic displays, this can be a difficult task. As explained earlier in this chapter, some elements of history are more tangible than others—and, as such, more easily represented in a museum setting. Whips and chains help visitors visualize the physical brutality of abuse, but how do curators convey the exhaustion stemming from long hours of physical labor under the hot southern sun? Similarly, battles can easily be depicted in museums, but how do these displays represent the more mundane aspects of military life, such as disease, illness, home sickness, and the emotional impact of war?[125] The balance between famous and non-famous people also poses a problem for curators, as they are challenged with providing recognizable narratives that honor historical leaders while also emphasizing ordinary people, groups, and communities whose names have been long forgotten by the public. These tasks, though not impossible, are understandably challenging for curators—particularly those with tighter budget and space limitations. However, with innovation, critical self-assessment, and institutional accountability, curators can avoid the temptation to sensationalize narratives by reflecting on the tapestry

[125] Some scholars have discussed the challenge of expressing these experiences in a museum setting. For example, a group of academics collaborated with the Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra (Historical National Museum of War in Italy) and co-designed a sound-based visitor experience that was placed in the remains of a World War I camp. Their goal, they write, was to 'communicate emotion and create an emotional experience from a similarly unemotional entity, the remains of an archaeological site' and to make visitors '*feel the past*' through 'an evocative experience that fuses the physical, sensorial and social dimensions of being there with the history of the place itself'. See: Mark T. Marshall, et al., 'Audio-Based Narratives for the Trenches of World War I: Intertwining Stories, Places and Interaction for an Evocative Experience', *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies* 85 (2016), 37-39.

of our modern world wherein millions of ordinary moments are interrupted by occasional monumental events.

When current events fade into history, a disparity often arises between historical truth and collective memory. Instead of embracing complexity and nuance, collective memory can opt instead for a convenient, simplified past. This process commonly includes homogenizing historical events or figures, oversimplifying complicated stories, and creating binary narratives that compartmentalize each person into a tidy box labelled 'good' or 'bad'. Moreover, this process tends to be shaped by current standards, climates, and distastes, producing a politicized history that fits into a framework of the modern world. This process becomes even more apparent when dealing with sensitive (slavery) or politically-charged (the Civil War) histories. Due to pressure from visitors and donors, museum narratives sometimes regurgitate these skewed versions of the past, choosing to align displays with what visitors expect to see rather than what they need to see.[126]

The museums in this study consider slavery and the Civil War with varying levels of complexity and objectivity. At times each institution embraces nuances and contentiousness; for example, the ISM distinguishes between slave conditions in different areas, the NMAAHC addresses African slave traders and the African domestic slave trade in its displays, and the DuSable balances slave trade-era agency with retribution. On the other hand, there are also moments along these museum journeys in which histories are homogenized and narratives are dichotomized; for example, the ISM does not acknowledge the flaws of West African societies in *Life in West Africa*, which perpetuates

[126] Ira Berlin explains the disparity between the history and the collective memory of slavery: 'Searching for the present in the past, popular understanding almost always returns to the last years of the southern slave regime. Such a view emphasizes the slaves' labor in cotton and sugar, their residence in the black belt, and their worship in African-Christian churches. It ignores or denies slavery's long history, its near universality, its association on mainland North America with tobacco and rice, its presence in the North as well as the South, and the centuries in which slaves rejected Christianity. Such popular understanding is often based on human recollections.' See: Berlin, 'American Slavery in History and Memory', p. 1263. For Berlin's full discussion on the tensions between history and memory (both in regards to slavery specifically and the past more generally), see pages 1261-1268. See also: Corkern, 'Heritage Tourism'.

the idealization of black bodies, the NMAAHC too often correlates good with black and bad with white by failing to engage with contentious aspects of black history, and the DuSable skips West African history and the Civil War altogether in 'Freedom and Resistance', omitting significant periods from the historical timeline.

Despite the centuries that have lapsed since slavery and the Civil War, these topics continue to be debated in cultural-political circles. When historical events are politicized, it is particularly important that history museums avoid the trappings of the political climate and presentism. For example, current political attitudes on the left sometimes dismiss the Founding Fathers as a homogenous group of slave supporters and often slip into a binary understanding of American history that unbendingly ties morality to race. Meanwhile, some right-wing voices have taken advantage of this disavowal and monopolized the Founding Fathers, homogenizing and misrepresenting their ideologies for modern political gain. The Civil War has also fallen victim to politicization. In this case, the period has been altered and adopted by the political right, and the modern battle over commemoration in public spaces has fallen largely along party lines. It is the responsibility of museums, then, to present these periods authentically and, by doing so, insert truth into the emotionally-charged modern manifestation of historical narratives.

Perhaps it is easier for certain types of museums to bow to some of these political pressures than others. Museums that focus solely on the Civil War are likely to attract supporters of the Confederacy and adherents to the Lost Cause. As such, presenting an authentic depiction of the Civil War—which inherently rejects many talking points of Confederate sympathizers in current debates—will risk alienating visitors and affecting sales. Similarly, black history museums are most likely to attract African Americans or politically left-leaning non-black visitors. In this case, then, it can be easier to present politicized and expected historical narratives than to authentically represent these periods and risk criticism or decreased attendance. It is important for those who study museums to

acknowledge the intersection between politicized histories and what is (or is not) presented in these institutions; in this way, scholars gain insight into the motivations behind displays rather than analyzing them at face value. In an era defined by the politicization of everything from histories to clean water, citizens should be able to trust that institutions of knowledge will resist political pressure and tell the stories of the past authentically and objectively.

Slavery and the Civil War have left innumerable marks on America's commemorative landscape. From plaques to museums, battlefields to memorials, and street signs to plantations, townspeople across the nation have had to address the important intersection of place and history. This dynamic sometimes manifests itself in black history museums, though the element of 'place' could be further utilized to spark unique conversations. The most common way for a black history museum to connect itself to its city is by creating a localized narrative. An international narrative is also important when dealing with black history—particularly with the inherently international topic of slavery—however, while an internationalized slavery narrative will introduce visitors to the African diaspora and global themes that recur throughout black history, a narrative that is exclusively international may miss opportunities to address more local histories. When internationalization is tempered with localization, these museums can guide their cities into new dialogues of acknowledgement and reconciliation.

In this study, narrative localization is most effectively utilized by the ISM. While the DuSable nationalizes its slavery narrative and the NMAAHC works between the two approaches of localization and nationalization, the ISM focuses on local ties to the slave trade and slavery.[127] Though the museum also employs an internationalized approach, both *Enslavement and the Middle Passage* and *Legacy* address Liverpool's historical

[127] Understandably, the DuSable nationalizes its slavery museum because the historical narrative does not overlap significantly with Chicago history. On the other hand, later periods (like the Great Migration or black power) are covered through more of a local lens.

connections to the slave trade. By addressing these histories and their legacies, the ISM cultivates a powerful, unapologetic narrative that is inimitably linked to the surrounding city. The NMAAHC achieves this to some extent—for example, one display highlights the use of slave labor to build Washington, D.C.—but the majority of the narrative represents national history and a collection of local histories from around the country. While the NMAAHC would likely benefit from further engagement with local history, it is understandable that a national history museum would opt for a broader scope. The ISM, on the other hand, is perfectly situated to help Liverpool come to terms with its troublesome past.

In addition to localizing narratives, museums can also link their displays to surrounding commemorative landscapes. This is particularly applicable to museum displays that deal with histories relevant to the surrounding area; for example, while the DuSable might draw attention to nearby sites commemorating the black power era, the ISM and NMAAHC are surrounded by slavery- and Civil War-based sites. These museums, then, could reference nearby relevant sites, creating conversations unique to place and era. Alternatively, museums could suggest that visitors pair their visit with other museums, historical sites, memorials, or monuments in the vicinity that would complement the institution's narrative. Moreover, these suggestions may transcend black history to incorporate other nearby complementary sites. For example, the NMAAHC could direct visitors to institutions like the Anacostia Museum, the Holocaust Museum, the American Indian Museum, Monticello, or Mount Vernon, and could explain to visitors the benefits of these pairings. By encouraging visitors to continue their pursuit of black history outside of that particular building, the museum would demonstrate that it supports its visitors' educational journeys and that it sees other institutions as opportunities to complement rather than compete. Currently, these suggestions are not presented to visitors in the

museums in this study, but they could be easily incorporated into displays, websites, or museum literature.

The events of history serve as building blocks and the cumulative impact of these events creates foundations on which society can move forward. These links—sometimes subtle, sometimes overt—connect eras, events, and people, creating a tapestry of interconnected periods. Moreover, just as historical eras link to one another, so too do they influence our modern world. In this way, history is fluid and relationships between eras are ever-evolving. This is particularly true for slavery and the Civil War, two historical periods with far-reaching effects. Because these two eras had such an impact on subsequent eras (and continue to be impactful today), the modern education of slavery and the Civil War should incorporate these connections. In other words, to gain an authentic and comprehensive understanding of these periods, it is essential to consider them within the broad framework of the American story.

Unfortunately, black history museums—and history museums more broadly—miss opportunities to highlight links between historical events or between the past and the present. There are many times during slavery and Civil War displays that this type of indication would be appropriate. There are connections to be made between topics like proslavery apologists and 20th century segregationists, race relations in the antebellum age and throughout the reign of Jim Crow, abolitionists and civil rights activists, or racial tensions within abolitionism and civil rights activism. Similarly, the Civil War and the ensuing Lost Cause has remained a contentious topic since the war ended. In addition to the links between the Civil War and the erection of Civil War monuments (primarily during the heights of Jim Crow and civil rights), this topic continues to dominate passions in modern America.[128] These opportunities—along with many others—are awaiting

[128] Most of these statues were erected between 1905 and 1915, though there was a second surge from 1957 to 1965. See: 'Whose Heritage?: Public Symbols of the Confederacy', *Southern Poverty Law Center* <https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/com_whose_heritage.pdf> [accessed on 16 April 2018].

museums who are willing to stray from a strictly chronological structure in order to educate visitors not just about different time periods, but rather about the relationships between historical periods and the recurring themes that are relevant throughout American history.

Whether curators are considering the struggle between accuracy and authenticity, entertainment and education, historical politicization and historical truth, localization and internationalization, or the past and present, museums representing sensitive and politically charged histories like slavery and the Civil War face a host of challenges. Representing two of America's defining chapters bears responsibility and pressure—a pressure that becomes even greater considering the modern political climate in which these museums are currently operating. Despite these challenges, however, black history museums can create authentic displays that educate visitors objectively, comprehensively, and responsibly. As Christy Coleman, chief executive at Richmond's American Civil War Museum, noted in an interview with *Washington Post*:

> *Museums are not neutral space. We may not be activists, but we're not neutral. If your community is in crisis and you're an institution that has the resources to add to that conversation…you are failing if you are not actively involved in the needs of your community.*[129]

As Coleman argues, though the histories of slavery and the Civil War are particularly tense amid the current political climate, it is the role of museums to contribute to these public conversations. While it may be easier to regurgitate convenient and expected histories, it is becoming increasingly important that museums endeavor to provide visitors with authentic, balanced truths.

[129] Gregory S. Schneider, 'An African American leader brings a provocative take to expanded Civil War museum', *Washington Post* (15 April 2018) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/an-african-american-leader-brings-a-provocative-take-to-expanded-civil-war-museum/2018/04/15/6a7daba4-3db4-11e8-974f-aacd97698cef_story.html?utm_term=.0d90d4b366e6> [accessed on 16 April 2018].

3

Representations of the Long Civil Rights Era

'History will not be kind to us so you have a moral obligation…to speak up, speak out and get in good trouble. You can do it. You must do it. Not just for yourselves but for generations yet unborn.'—John Lewis

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will examine representations of the long civil rights era—as defined in the introductory chapter—in the DuSable, BCRI, NMAAHC, and, to a lesser extent, the ISM. These analyses will be guided by the four themes central to this thesis: education and entertainment (along with a narrower analysis on concepts of authenticity and accuracy), history and memory, interconnected and isolated timelines, and place. Considering each of these themes within the framework of the long civil rights movement will provide insight into the ways that this period is represented in museums, what challenges these representations present to curators, and how these displays are impacted by our modern world (and, inversely, how our understanding of the modern world is impacted by these displays).

The chapter begins with an examination of Jim Crow representation in the four museums in this study. First, this section analyzes how museums represent segregation, making correlations between segregated spaces and services, *de facto* and *de jure* segregation, and tangible and intangible histories. The tensions between authenticity/accuracy and education/entertainment are then considered through the lens of Jim Crow-era violence, as this section questions how museums represent the methods used to enforce segregation. Next, black communities—or 'cities within cities'—are explored in the BCRI and NMAAHC, alongside a discussion about the importance of balanced narratives. This section then examines segregationists and analyzes the omission of moderate segregationist thought in these displays.[1] Next, the method of localization is considered in an analysis of how museums approach local Jim Crow histories. Finally, this section addresses the representation of black stereotypes in these displays, questioning how

[1] 'Moderate segregationist thought' refers to those who believed in the merits of segregation but did not support the use of violence to achieve a segregated society.

black collectibles, racist memorabilia, and minstrelsy memorabilia is positioned in each institution to cultivate distinct narratives.

After analyzing representations of Jim Crow, the next section will explore the ways that the civil rights era is presented in museum displays. This section will begin with a discussion about the Short Movement and Long Movement theories, considering how museums define their civil rights timelines and how this impacts the overall narrative. The next section will center around the 'Great Man' theory by questioning how museums distribute their focus between organizations, individual organizers and activists, lesser-known leaders, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The methods of localization, nationalization, and internationalization will then be discussed in relation to civil rights representation, as well as identifying the merits and drawbacks of each method. Next, this section will analyze the incorporation of women in civil rights displays, while also considering the benefits of inclusive narratives. Subsequently, the section will consider representations of the media and its role in activism, organization, and publicity. Justice and injustice are then analyzed both individually and as complicated counterparts. Finally, it concludes with a discussion of the ways that these museums represent the government, and how they balance criticizing and crediting legislators of the mid-20th century.

The final section of this chapter focuses on the post-civil rights period. It begins by analyzing representations of the black power movement through four considerations. The first two considerations question the framing of the movement in time and space, analyzing the period's relationship to the civil rights era and its temporal and spatial framing. The second two considerations analyze the tone of black power narratives, questioning which elements of the movement's complex history are emphasized or de-emphasized to cultivate specific narratives. The second half of this section examines representations of popular culture in two NMAAHC upper galleries—*Sports: Leveling the Playing Field* and *Cultural Galleries*. While this thesis largely avoids engaging with topics only represented in one

museum—as it strives to keep a comparative tone—considering these two galleries provides insight into three broader museological questions. First, it questions whether these two galleries create inauthentic narratives that emphasize fame and, as a result, marginalize ordinary people and experiences. Next, it situates these representations of entertainment into the debate on entertainment/education in museums. Finally, it continues an analysis from the previous chapter that traces linear historical narratives in museums.

JIM CROW

INTRODUCTION

The period of Jim Crow, bookended by slavery (and a brief Reconstruction) on one end and civil rights on the other, was a defining era of American history. Segregationist thought—and the actions taken to advance it—marks an elongated transition from slavery to legal equality, and ideas, misconceptions, and resentment from this period continue to influence modern race relations. Despite its importance, scholarly understanding of museological representations of Jim Crow is severely lacking. This section addresses this gap in knowledge, considering the ways that the DuSable, BCRI, NMAAHC, and, to a lesser extent, the ISM engage with this sensitive period. By tracking representations of Jim Crow segregation, black communities, segregationists, localization, and black stereotypes, this section will examine whether these museums authentically engage with this period, how they balance education and entertainment, and how the most sensitive parts of this difficult history are proportionately communicated to visitors.

SEGREGATION

Museological representation of segregation is often achieved through engagement with public spaces and services.[2] Though there is overlap between these two elements, the former emphasizes the physical separation of the races while the latter considers Jim Crow through lenses of services like education, employment, and medical care. Representing the

[2] 'Segregation' as used in this thesis is distinct from 'separation'. In 1963 Malcolm X described the difference in a talk called 'The Race Problem': 'This new type of black man, he doesn't want integration; he wants separation. Not segregation, separation. To him, segregation, as we're taught by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, means that which is forced upon inferiors by superiors. A segregated community is a Negro community. But the white community, though it's all white, is never called a segregated community. It's a separate community….We don't go for segregation. We go for separation. Separation is when you have your own. You control your own economy; you control your own politics; you control your own society; you control your own everything. You have yours and you control yours; we have ours and we control ours.' Speech by Malcolm X, 'The Race Problem', (1963). Available online at: <http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/mmt/mxp/speeches/mxt14.html> [accessed on 1 December 2018].

segregation of public spaces has a slight advantage for curators; the visual, physical nature of these spaces translates more easily into a museum setting. Though these spaces are more tangible, there are still several difficulties in this representation. For example, while *de jure* segregation produced a trail of documents and artifacts, *de facto* segregation in public spaces can be more difficult to convey in visual mediums. For these reasons, then, curators face challenges in the representation of segregation—whether in public spaces or in services, *de jure* or *de facto*—but these challenges often produce innovative responses through displays that creatively communicate the tangible and intangible elements of this topic.

While this study focuses on the analysis of narratives more than the methods used to represent histories, these two components combine in segregation displays. In the representation of segregation at all four institutions in this study, there are two methods used to represent the era, creating commonality between these museums. Because of this, it is useful to examine the ways that segregation is approached through these two methods, as well as why these methods are important to consider within an analysis of museological narratives.

When representing segregation in public spaces, one of the most frequently employed methods is artifact display. This approach warrants a brief explanation here, as the process sees the transition of purpose and power of Jim Crow memorabilia. Because segregation in public spaces was often sign-posted (although, it should be noted that segregation was also enforced through word of mouth, tradition, and intimidation), the post-Jim Crow period has inherited these tangible markers of history. For this reason, signs with inscriptions like ‘Whites only’ or ‘Coloreds use back door’ frequent Jim Crow displays in museums, providing a visual and physical accompaniment to annotations and displays. The three American museums in this study incorporate these signs to some extent, cementing the artifacts as standard museological inclusions in the representation of

segregation. In addition to these signs, pairs of larger items are sometimes displayed to contrast the quality of 'separate but equal' facilities in public areas. Curators often approach this type of representation with a pair of segregated water fountains—in fact, this is the first display seen by BCRI visitors when the preliminary film screen is lifted and they first enter the *Barriers Gallery*.[3]

While some visitors may find these items offensive, the memorabilia undergo a re-contextualization process in museums during which its purpose is transformed. Similar to the representation of antebellum-era whips, chains, and branding irons, the purpose of segregation memorabilia transitions from items intended to separate, to items intended to empower. For this reason, the displaying of segregation items—whether in small corners of history museums or, like Michigan's Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, throughout the whole museum journey—is an effective way of conveying history through simple objects with significant transformative power.[4] As Dr. David Pilgrim, curator at the Jim Crow Museum, has explained: 'I consider myself a garbage man because much of this stuff is garbage. But some of it is useful garbage.'[5]

In addition to the use of artifact display, black history museums often utilize replication in order to visually represent segregation. In this study, the DuSable,

[3] As the screen lifts, the first thing visitors see is the pair of water fountains. The visual, emotive nature of this simple display is a strong start to the museum journey. This is mentioned in some BCRI reviews. A few of these reviews read: 'When they lifted that screen and you see the "colored" and "white" water fountains, my daughter said, "Mommy, I couldn't live like this!" She could see for herself how our people suffered. That's why this museum is so important.'; 'As the video ends, the screen lifts and those two water fountains, White and Colored, are there, front and slightly off-center. It's jarring—and that's just the beginning.'; 'A small but powerful thing that really got to me were the water fountains. I'd seen many photos of…"white" and "colored" water fountains, but…it just seemed like another "separate but equal" thing. What the photos don't show is that [though] the fountain for "colored" looks ok on the exterior, the sink and the fountain itself are rusty, broken down, cracked, and filthy—and for the white people it is pristine and new.' See: Robert Hamburger, '"For Us the Living": Visits to Civil Rights Museums', *Southern Cultures* 14.3 (2008) 52-67; pp. 59-60; *TripAdvisor* (25 September 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r527287753-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html> [accessed on 15 October 2018]; *TripAdvisor* (24 September 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r526884536-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html> [accessed on 15 October 2018].

[4] The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia is housed in Ferris State University (Big Rapids, Michigan). See: *Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia* <https://ferris.edu/jimcrow/>.

[5] Erik Lords, 'Keeping Jim Crow Alive', *Black Issues in Higher Education* 19.8 (28), p. 28.

NMAAHC, and BCRI engage with replication to great effect—particularly in the representation of segregated transportation. The DuSable creatively incorporates a booth from a segregated train car, in which visitors are invited to sit and watch a video about the period. More extensive is the NMAAHC's display of Southern Railway Company Coach No. 1200, which has been redesigned as a segregated railroad car. Interestingly, this large-scale display appears against the backdrop of the Declaration of Independence wall inscription from the 'Paradox of Liberty' display below (described in the previous chapter). This juxtaposition, whether intentional or unintentional, may cause a moment of reflection for visitors as they consider the ideals of the nation against the realities of segregation. Segregated transportation also appears in the BCRI, where the replica of a segregated bus carries a statue of Rosa Parks staring defiantly out the window. In all these examples, replication is similarly used to explore segregated transportation, though the displays produce distinct narratives at each institution: the engagement with segregated railway transportation at the DuSable and NMAAHC ties together Jim Crow and Great Migration narratives, while the BCRI's bus replica highlights one of the most infamous forms of segregation that would later be challenged by the Montgomery Bus Boycotts and the Freedom Rides. These varied narratives ensure that each institution remains unique, while the similarities serve as a reminder that curators can approach black history through certain entry points due to their tangible nature, their relatability, or their aesthetic qualities.

White classroom replica (ca. 1953), BCRI

Black classroom replica (ca. 1953), BCRI

While segregation replicas frequently depict transportation, other displays go further in serving as visual contrasts between white and black facilities. For example, the BCRI achieves this through a comparative classroom display, in which two classroom replicas stand side by side.[6] Both classrooms are dated 1953—one is in a white school, the other in a black school. The white classroom has superior lighting, furnishings, books, and amenities, and portraits of George Washington and Dwight Eisenhower hang on the wall. The African-American classroom is significantly lower quality, complete with poorer lighting, smaller and less comfortable desks, and an older chalkboard. On the wall, portraits of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass pay homage to the abolition of slavery. This display is likely to remind many visitors of their childhood classrooms, like

[6] In his assessment of the BCRI, Owen Dwyer discusses replicas (such as this classroom display) used to convey segregation. He writes: 'Visitors are invited to walk among and across the boundaries characterizing white supremacy in replica schoolhouses, kitchens, and theaters. These reproductions strive to create emotional connections to the present by recreating the spatial milieu of the past.' See: Owen J. Dwyer, 'Interpreting the Civil Rights Movement: Contradiction, Confirmation, and the Cultural Landscape'. In Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford (eds) *The Civil Rights Movement in American History* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2006), 5-27 (p. 19).

one who wrote: ‘Photos, videos, and vignettes of classrooms and a church churned up memories of that era for me.’[7] As achieved most effectively in the BCRI, the use of replication to highlight the disparity between black and white services can communicate and evoke in a unique way that cannot necessarily be achieved through annotations or other more static methods.[8]

1950s diner replica, BCRI

In addition to representing segregation in public spaces and services, museums also engage with the ways that segregationists enforced the laws and customs that upheld Jim Crow ideologies. While violent enforcement of segregation often dominates the collective memory of this period, the legal enforcement of segregation is also an important component of Jim Crow museum displays. In this study, it is the BCRI that extensively engages with legal enforcement. The BCRI stands alone in its legal emphasis, and its representation of the topic is fairly extensive. Its display of ‘Birmingham’s Racial

[7] *TripAdvisor* (21 December 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r445990104-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 14 January 2017]. In addition to reminding visitors about their childhood school experiences, the quality disparity between these two classroom replicas also seems reminiscent of modern disparities between affluent suburban schools (largely white) and impoverished inner-city schools (largely black).

[8] Replication can also be a useful approach to the emotional impact of segregation. On one of the BCRI’s most powerful displays (see image in the text), statues depicting a white teenage boy and girl sit happily at a diner counter. To the side of the display, shadowed in the darkness, is a black teenage girl holding her books in a self-conscious manner. This is perhaps the finest use of replication in this study, as well as the most effective portrayal of segregation’s psychological and emotional scars.

Segregation Ordinances' is a prime example of this engagement. The ordinances—like 'Section 597: Negroes and White Persons not to Play Together'—are transcribed for visitors to read in their original wording. The most eye-catching display on legal enforcement, however, is the statue of a black man sitting in a courtroom below an excerpt from Thomas Jefferson's first inaugural address: 'EQUAL AND EXACT JUSTICE TO ALL MEN OF WHATEVER STATE OR PERSUASION'. The judge's chair is empty, signifying the lack of judicial support for black Americans.[9] These and other displays effectively demonstrate the ways that the law—rather than solely angry white mobs—enforced and maintained a system of legal segregation.

Courtroom display, BCRI

Close-up image of the courtroom display, BCRI

The legal enforcement of segregation is visible in these displays, but there tends to be a far greater emphasis on the use of violence to enforce segregation. All four institutions in this study engage with this violence, though it is the three American museums that highlight the topic most by engaging with race riots, bombings, and lynchings. The BCRI highlights these acts of extreme violence in displays examining lynching and the infamous

[9] For former Education and Exhibitions Director Ahmad Ward's full commentary on this display, as well as his thoughts on the rest of the BCRI, see: 'Birmingham Civil Rights Institute', *American Artifacts* (15 August 2013) <https://www.c-span.org/video/?314619-1/birmingham-civil-rights-institute> [accessed on 30 October 2018].

bombings that gave the city its nickname 'Bombingham'. The DuSable also utilizes its location by emphasizing the Red Summer of 1919 and the Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells. It is the NMAAHC, however, that focuses most extensively on the violent aspects of the era. Riots and racial violence are explored throughout *Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom*, but the most haunting display is one that focuses solely on lynching.[10] This display includes several photos of lynchings, as *Atlantic* writer Adam Serwer describes:

> *The artifacts that persist in my memory, the way a bright flash does when you close your eyes, are the photographs of lynchings. But it's not the burned, mutilated bodies that stick with me. It's the faces of the white men in the crowd. There's the photo of the lynching…in Indiana in 1930, in which a white man can be seen grinning at the camera as he tenderly holds the hand of his wife or girlfriend….There's the photo of a crowd of white men huddled behind the smoldering corpse of a man burned to death; one of them is wearing a smart suit, a fedora hat, and a bright smile….They were human beings, people who took immense pleasure in the utter cruelty of torturing others to death—and were so proud of doing so that they posed for photographs with their handiwork, jostling to ensure they caught the eye of the lens, so that the world would know they'd been there.*[11]

Below these images the names of lynching victims are lightly etched onto the glass panel. As *Atlantic* writer Vann R. Newkirk II describes: 'One exhibit features the names of lynching victims, a soul-rending litany that feels even more awful because of the names themselves.'[12]

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[10] In the NMAAHC, distressing images such as these appear within a red border. Signs on the outside of the galleries warn that '[i]mages outlined in red may not be suitable for younger or more sensitive visitors.'

[11] In this article, *Atlantic* writer Adam Serwer draws connections between the white men in these images and modern callousness that characterizes the worst impulses of Trumpism. See: Adam Serwer, 'The Cruelty Is the Point', *The Atlantic* (3 October 2018) <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/10/the-cruelty-is-the-point/572104/?utm_medium=social&utm_term=2018-10-03T20%3A43%3A10&utm_content=edit-promo&utm_campaign=the-atlantic&utm_source=facebook> [accessed on 5 October 2018].

[12] Vann R. Newkirk II, 'How a Museum Reckons With Black Pain', *The Atlantic* (23 September 2016) <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/09/national-museum-of-african-american-history-and-culture-smithsonian/501356/> [accessed on 15 October 2018].

Names of lynching victims are lightly etched into this display, NMAAHC

Hanging tree postcard, DuSable Museum

While these displays—as well as the many others dealing with the violent enforcement of segregation—are significant in the tapestry of Jim Crow segregation, it is also important that narratives remain balanced between the most extreme parts of the period and the more mundane, less tangible realities of Jim Crow. Photographs of lynchings (BCRI; NMAAHC), lynch ropes (NMAAHC), and contemporary newspapers with headlines like 'BLOODY BATTLES STILL RAGE IN CHICAGO DESPITE 4,000 TROOPS' (DuSable) tell an essential and devastating part of the segregation story, but authentic displays can maintain perspective by also engaging with the legal and comparatively moderate resistance to racial integration. Many of the most frustrating, disheartening moments of the Jim Crow period stemmed from court cases or general indifference to the cause of black advancement, and though those aspects may be less tangible, their inclusion helps displays prioritize authenticity over accuracy and education over entertainment.

BALANCING SEGREGATIONIST NARRATIVES

Museums often engage with the means used to enforce *de jure* or *de facto* segregation, but segregationists are also an important element of Jim Crow narratives. Understanding the arguments and ideologies held by the white resistance helps to contextualize the civil rights era, and roots black communities, activism, and protest within a more expansive societal framework. When segregationists are represented, museums convey the period most authentically when the broad range of segregationist thought is incorporated. The most violent forms of segregationist ideology are dominant in the collective memory of the era and their inclusion creates more stimulating museum displays; however, in order to authentically represent the long civil rights era and embrace diversity of thought, a balanced segregationist narrative that examines violent segregationists, as well as moderate segregationists is key.

The most common entry point for museums representing segregationists is the Ku Klux Klan. A donated Klansman robe often serves as the centerpiece for these displays, as it does in all four museums in this study. Though visitors are likely to learn about the Klan in African-American history museums, the extent of the information provided can range from a simple placard (DuSable) to an extensive display including images, footage, and details about Klan membership numbers (NMAAHC).[13] Moreover, the narrative of each of these displays can vary based on their positioning along the museum journey. For example, the NMAAHC and the DuSable frame the Klan within a tapestry of urbanization, migration, and multiracialism; in a different approach, the BCRI examines the Klan within a narrower scope of racism, violence, and injustice; the ISM, meanwhile, positions the robe display across from a video playing footage of 20th century black leaders. Additionally, these robes provide an opportunity to localize Klan displays, tackling painful histories

[13] It could be argued that the DuSable's brief engagement with the Ku Klux Klan frames racism as a southern problem rather than a national one; however, because many topics covered in this exhibition are so brief, it is also possible that the lack of detail simply follows the broader trends toward brevity in the museum. For more on the connections between Chicago and the Ku Klux Klan, see the next footnote.

within these cities. This inclusion is often subtle—interested visitors will need to read the donation annotation to check for local links—but it offers possibilities to further engage with local segregationists and violence.[14]

The incorporation of the Ku Klux Klan in Jim Crow displays demonstrates the dangerous racial climate of the era and, as such, is an important inclusion; however, moderate segregationist ideology is often missing from these narratives. The DuSable broaches the subject by displaying a membership card for the White Citizens' Council next to its Klan robe. The distinction between groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the White Citizens' Council helps to challenge the idea of homogenous attitudes toward segregation but stops short of a more nuanced examination of segregationist thought.

The *Confrontation Gallery* in the BCRI comes closest to an engagement with more moderate segregationists. The main room in this gallery (subsequently referred to as the 'Confrontation Room') is comprised of Plexiglas panels hanging from the ceiling, each displaying the image of life-sized community members. As visitors walk through the dark room, they are bombarded by racial abuses and epithets. Through the speakers, people say things like:

> *That outfit called the Black Muslims, they want us to set aside a few states just for the niggers. Hey I think we ought to give 'em three or four, just to get rid of 'em.*
>
> *The niggers are moving north 'cause they like to live in big cities, the way dogs like to sleep, all piled up.*
>
> *If they get their way, the communists are gonna take over the whole country.*
>
> *Don't ever let them believe they'll become equals.*

[14] Visitors may be surprised to learn that the Ku Klux Klan was not exclusive to the South. Presence of the Klan in Chicago can be traced to 1921, though numbers began declining by 1924 and it found no permanent foothold. Moreover, Hyde Park—the DuSable's current location—was one of the areas in which the group found support. Because of this local relevance, it is surprising that the DuSable does not engage further with this topic. For more on the Ku Klux Klan in Chicago, see for example: Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Inc., 1992), pp. 93-126.

Integration began on this planet when evil integrated with good, which God forbad.

Put 'em on a boat and send 'em back to Africa.

This room is a unique approach to the representation of segregationists in the wake of the *Brown* decision.[15] Though these recordings tend to be more vitriolic than moderate segregationist ideology, they provide some insight into common opinions held at this time.[16]

Confrontation Gallery, BCRI

Figures in the *Confrontation Gallery*, BCRI

[15] The use of sound to communicate these racial ideas and slurs is a particularly effective way of conveying racism and segregationist thought. The actors used in these recordings were convincing, and the emotions evoked by the room is likely to combine with personal visitor experiences to produce a powerful outcome. Siobhan McHugh explains: '[W]hen an informant narrates an experience in an affecting way (i.e., with palpable emotion), listeners will register the emotion through the prism of their own lived experiences; we can infer that this personalization will confer added impact.' See: Siobhan McHugh, 'The Affective Power of Sound: Oral History on Radio', *The Oral History Review* 39.2 (2012), 187-206 (p. 195).

[16] Visitors seem to be very impacted by this display: 'It is one thing to read racially charged words; but it is quite a different thing to hear and see people saying these things. The displays are powerful and really moving.'; 'The "confrontation" room was very disturbing in an emotional/moving way.' This feedback reflects the sentiments of many other visitors, and I agree that the main room of the *Confrontation Gallery* is one of the most engaging displays in the BCRI. See: *TripAdvisor* (20 February 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r255508655-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 4 February 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (29 October 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r432800602-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 18 November 2016].

Akin to the absence of apologist thought in museological representations of slavery, omitting 20th century moderate segregationists creates a gap in the complex Jim Crow tapestry. While the more extreme types of segregationists are explored—namely the Ku Klux Klan—average white Americans who were opposed to integration or who were concerned about federal overreach are omitted from the narrative, extracting nuance from our understanding of the era. Owen Dwyer has also raised this issue, writing:

> *Portrayals of racism at these sites focus on white supremacy's most violent and widely scorned expressions: segregation, lynching, and the Ku Klux Klan. Absent is a sustained treatment of the more mundane and insidious forms of racism that valorize whiteness over other social identities and reinforce it as a way of knowing and negotiating difference.*[17]

Indeed, these omissions neglect the mundane in favor of the extreme—a process that is likely to entertain, but not one that seeks to convey authentic historical complexities.

This museological gap reflects a similar omission in Jim Crow and civil rights historiography that has only recently been addressed by new research.[18] In an article from 2000, historian Charles W. Eagles stresses the need for further understanding of the average segregationist, who tended to be less extreme than his more vocal counterpart:

> *[S]cholars need to learn more about the beliefs of those common southern whites who did not support the [civil rights] movement….The attitudes of ordinary people need to be examined as well. Whites' ideas about* Negroes, amalgamation, segregation, the southern way of life, states' rights, *and* communism [emphasis in the original text], *for example, warrant exploration because they might reveal much about what George Fredrickson called "the Black image in the white mind" and*

[17] Dwyer, 'Interpreting the Civil Rights Movement', p. 17; cites Owen J. Dwyer and John Paul Jones III, 'White Socio-spatial Epistemology', *Social and Cultural Geography* 1 (2000), 209-222.

[18] Writing in 2006, George Lewis attributes the recent increase in segregationist studies to the release of relevant papers and manuscript collections. He writes that with these new documents available to them, 'historians have returned to the study of segregationists in a bid to afford them the nuanced and subtle historical analyses that have long documented other aspects of southern history.' George Lewis, *Massive Resistance: The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2006), pp. vii, 5-8.

> *thereby expose more fully southern white attitudes toward changing race relations and the civil rights movement*.[19]

Nearly 20 years after the publication of this article, more nuanced examinations of these ideas have not yet been incorporated into Jim Crow museum displays.

Historian George Lewis revisited this topic six years after Eagles' analysis, outlining the many reasons why historians have only recently begun to thoroughly and objectively explore segregationists. Of the contributing factors outlined by Lewis, one of the primary reasons for the neglect of this group centers on the dismissal of segregationists as racists:

> *[F]or too long scholars have been content simply to explain away segregationists' actions by labelling them "racist". The vast majority most certainly were, but that should not preclude historians from seeking to understand how that racism manifested itself, how those manifestations were transmitted, or what the effect of that transmission was.*[20]

With this in mind, it is appropriate for curators to incorporate segregationists into their museological scope. Increased engagement with segregationist ideologies—particularly the less extreme voices that have been long neglected in favor of radical and violent manifestations of segregation—will help visitors understand this complex topic while also addressing related residual ideologies that linger in modern American thought.[21] The displays examining black stereotypes and racist memorabilia (described later in this section) provide an opportunity to develop these ideologies further, and some displays—

[19] Charles W. Eagles, 'Toward New Histories of the Civil Rights Era', *The Journal of Southern History* 66.4 (2000) 815-848, p. 835.
[20] Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, p. 6.
[21] Museums have a promising start here with examinations of black stereotypes and collectibles, and some displays—like the BCRI's *Confrontation Gallery*—offer strong starting points. But further exploration of people who did not support civil rights efforts or school integration but also did not engage in intimidation or violence would help visitors understand the underexplored white resistance that became characteristic of the 20th century.

like the BCRI's 'Confrontation Room'—have particularly strong foundations on which to build; however, significant work could be done to address this glaring omission.

Engagement (or, in some cases, further engagement) with moderate segregationist ideology would demonstrate that museums can effectively incorporate a diversity of ideas and experiences, rather than homogenizing or oversimplifying complex narratives. Moreover, by examining moderate segregationists curators would embrace mundane, ordinary experiences and, in doing so, create a more authentic representation of the range of 20th century segregationist views.[22] In turn, authentic museological representation of segregationists could provide a blueprint for visitors as they navigate the modern political climate. Though a bold decision, choosing to flag up correlations between 20th century segregationist/integrationist debates and modern political tensions would help visitors learn how to use the past in our present, while also countering the tendency to idealize modern race relations by addressing current societal issues.

'A CITY WITHIN THE CITY'

While it is important that museums highlight the ways that black communities were externally constructed—through legislation, social norms, and civic design—there are also empowering elements of the communities that rose from the ashes of segregation. Expanding the narrative to position the rise of black communities as a necessary response to segregation acknowledges both the actions and the reactions to the construction of separate neighborhoods. Black communities are briefly highlighted by the DuSable, though

[22] Displays that represent moderate segregationist thought could also prove to be more authentic for an alternative reason. As Adam Fairclough writes, civil rights strategists became aware that publicizing the most violent forms of white supremacy was the most effective way to achieve federal and legislative intervention. Thus, the more extreme forms of white supremacy that dominate collective memory and many museum displays represent the constructed image of segregation framed by civil rights strategists rather than the more nuanced and expansive spectrum of segregationist thought that truly existed at the time. See: Adam Fairclough, 'State of the Art: Historians and the Civil Rights Movement', *Journal of American Studies* 24 (1990), 387-398 (p. 397).

the topic is most extensively and effectively explored in the BCRI and NMAAHC—both of which warrant independent explanation. The BCRI's *Barriers* includes large-scale replicas of black community centers, including a barbershop, church, movie theatre, diner, classroom, and home. These replicas are notable for their aesthetic quality and their ability to innovatively teach about pillars of black communities; however, they also provide a powerful accompaniment to nearby segregation displays.

Inside the barbershop, BCRI

Inside the church, BCRI

By coupling displays on segregation with others exploring resilience and community, the BCRI narrative is able to emphasize the damaging impact of racial segregation—as well as the violence used to enforce it—without entirely victimizing African Americans. If the segregation displays appeared on their own, the narrative would have been characterized by victimization rather than by strength, innovation, and agency. Likewise, if the community centers would have been examined without being tempered by the reality of segregation and violence, the narrative may have inauthentically represented the era without the well-earned characterizations of endurance and resiliency. Overall then, these displays are thoughtfully paired to create a well-balanced, complex narrative that reflects the reality of a turbulent period.

Though it does not use the method of replication, the NMAAHC similarly engages with the strength of black communities in the early- and mid-20th century. The brutality of segregation and racism is examined in *Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom*; more space, however, is dedicated to themes like 'Community Building', 'Creating African American Culture', 'Building National Institutions', and 'Navigating a Segregated Reality'. Though the NMAAHC explores themes of segregation and segregationists in this gallery, there is not one particular area designated solely to Jim Crow. Instead, these topics are scattered throughout this portion of the museum journey, thematically placed around various chronological events. With a few exceptions, this does not render the journey or narrative incoherent or disjointed; instead, the widespread placement of displays touching on segregation crafts an intentional narrative that focuses less on African Americans being left out and more on the creation of new spaces and communities. The quotation by a former enslaved African American displayed in the beginning of this gallery sets the tone for the segregation narrative in NMAAHC: 'Give us our own land and we can take care of ourselves.'

Both the BCRI and the NMAAHC devote a significant amount of space to the examination of black communities.[23] These stories of individual and collective resiliency should be considered alongside segregation narratives, and representing one without the other fails to provide an authentic portrayal of the period. Within this process, however, it is important to remain balanced, putting these two components in a proportionate conversation with one another. Telling stories of black successes—particularly successes that stemmed from oppression—without balancing the narrative with information about segregation, violence, and segregationists could produce narratives that are too idealized. In this case, while Jim Crow-era black communities should be recognized for their

[23] Given the DuSable's origins in Chicago's South Side (also called Bronzeville), it is surprising that the museum does not engage with Jim Crow-era black communities. This topic, underpinned by a local focus, could produce a display that teaches visitors about Chicago's South Side, the origins of the DuSable Museum, and black communities more broadly.

achievements, it is also important that visitors understand that the communities were created by necessity rather than by choice.

CONFRONTING THE PAST THROUGH LOCALIZED NARRATIVES

Depending on the location of the museum, local histories can merge with broader narratives, which shrouds the narrative in increased scrutiny, sensitivity, and relevance. This is particularly true when the local history being addressed is a painful chapter of the town's past. As a result, localized displays have the ability to touch a nerve with visitors, but they also hold the potential to heal old wounds, open new conversations, and pave a path toward collective reconciliation. None of the museums in this study are located in cities untouched by 20th century racism—Birmingham, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Liverpool all carry the burden of this shameful chapter. Despite the opportunities, however, some institutions embrace a local narrative while others adopt an outward gaze toward other regions.

The BCRI and ISM make the most effort to confront local histories of segregation and discrimination, though different lenses produce distinct narratives. The BCRI keeps its historical focus on the United States and, more specifically, Birmingham and Alabama. Because the museum's civil rights displays are largely framed within the state's history, rooting Jim Crow displays in *Barriers* within the same framework creates a cohesive journey for visitors. Birmingham and Alabama are evident throughout the gallery. Whether visitors are reading 'Birmingham's Racial Segregation Ordinances', learning about workplace segregation in the Irondale Ore Mines or Birmingham Black Barons, or listening to gospel music while looking at contemporary photographs of various congregations in the area, they are learning about Jim Crow through the lens of the surrounding city.[24] The ISM also strives to connect displays to its surroundings. Though,

[24] Irondale sits roughly eight miles from Birmingham. The Birmingham Black Barons were the city's African-American baseball team until the 1960 when the Major Leagues integrated.

understandably, the localized narrative as a whole emphasizes the legacy of slavery, the 'Racism and Discrimination' display in *Legacy* highlights several examples of racial discrimination in Liverpool. Unlike the BCRI, however, this local perspective is coupled with a thematic and international consideration of racism and discrimination, challenging the idea of segregation as a solely American problem, but also dividing visitors' attention between international examples of intolerance.

An effectively localized Jim Crow display is in sight for the DuSable, but the current display falls short of explicitly emphasizing these connections. The Jim Crow section is strikingly brief and lacking compared to the museum's engagement with slavery or black power—in fact, some visitors recognized the brevity of segregation engagement, with one writing: 'I think the [collection] is surprisingly weak in depicting Jim Crow laws. [The current display] does not convey the systematic terror that was imposed upon black folks during Jim Crow.'[25] The framing of the DuSable's displays, however, hints at localized potential. Chicago and Illinois are present in these displays, and the period is considered within a Chicago-specific narrative that views segregation, riots, and white supremacist violence in a framework that blends Jim Crow with the Great Migration. This effective pairing, as well as the argument that some northern whites reacted poorly to black migration to Chicago, closely ties the narrative to the surrounding city. However, these links are not strongly emphasized, while other opportunities—most notably, the city's connection to Pullman Porters—are left entirely unindicated.[26]

[25] *TripAdvisor* (24 July 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g35805-d144244-r505272858-DuSable_Museum_of_African_American_History-Chicago_Illinois.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 20 September 2017].

[26] For more on the Pullman Porters and the group's connection to Chicago, see for example: Beth Tompkins Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); William Hamilton Harris, *Keeping the Faith: A. Philip Randolph, Milton P. Webster, and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, 1925-37* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1977); Joseph F. Wilson, *Tearing Down the Color Bar: A Documentary History and Analysis of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

Currently, the NMAAHC focuses its Jim Crow narrative on stories from around the nation rather than in the immediate region. Whether or not critics argue that the NMAAHC misses opportunities to localize its Jim Crow displays will depend on one's view of a national museum's purpose. If, however, curators were to increase their engagement with segregation in the surrounding area, there is a significant amount of history to address. Examples of segregation in public spaces abound in Washington, D.C.'s history, and—given the unique nature of this city—it may also be interesting to examine the ways that the city dealt with Jim Crow-era commemoration of racial histories, or the experiences of black tourists during this period. Moreover, as the nation's capital, stories that consider the city through governmental and political lenses would complement the museum's focus on a national narrative. All of these examples would present localized Jim Crow narratives, while also engaging with the city's multiple connections to residency, tourism, commemoration, and politics.[27]

Whenever museums engage with local histories, a link is formed between the institution's narrative and the surrounding city; however, when those histories are sensitive or painful, museums also have the opportunity to assume a leadership role in the process of acknowledgement and healing. Museums like the BCRI and ISM effectively position themselves in this way, addressing segregation, white supremacy, and discrimination in Birmingham and Liverpool, respectively. The DuSable's Jim Crow displays seem to have laid the groundwork for this path. A Chicago-centric narrative that blends Jim Crow with the Great Migration is present, but further steps could be made to emphasize this narrative to visitors. In the case of the NMAAHC, assessing the use of localization as a museological approach calls attention to the purpose and scope of national history museums. A broader gaze seems appropriate for a national museum—which makes it stand

[27] These historical considerations of local segregation could also lead to discussions about modern segregation in Washington, D.C. As a result, localizing the NMAAHC's Jim Crow narrative would educate visitors about segregation while also identifying the important connection between the past and present.

out from, for example, the nearby Anacostia Museum—but there is certainly an opportunity to incorporate local stories of segregation in the style of the BCRI, ISM, and, to a lesser extent, the DuSable. For all of these museums, localization can be considered a tool that helps confront painful pasts; effectively utilizing this tool can elevate a museum's civic leadership role by initiating important conversations that, though decades old, continue to have relevancy today.

ADDRESSING (AND CHALLENGING) STEREOTYPES

Throughout the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras white supremacy was maintained through various means, including intimidation, violence, and the normalization of the concept of a racial hierarchy. When whites portrayed African Americans as lazy, childlike, or incompetent, the idea of black inferiority became increasingly embedded into the American psyche.[28] Stereotypes promoting these characteristics were often portrayed through black collectibles and minstrelsy. The stereotypes included characters like Aunt Jemima, Uncle Mose, or 'pickaninnies' (a derogatory term referring to black children), and were popular for a variety of purposes, namely dehumanizing and satirizing African Americans in order to justify segregation and lynching.[29] Most museums (and all the museums in this study) dealing with African-American history engage with these issues; in

[28] Black stereotypes were also reinforced against the stark contrast of whites in popular culture. While African Americans were portrayed as lazy, infantile, and unreliable, whites were conveyed as strong, intelligent, and hardworking.

[29] The evolution of black stereotypes corresponded with what whites needed to believe about African Americans at that specific time in order to justify contemporaneous treatment. Ira Berlin explains that while 'European and European American masters denigrated Paulo d'Angoloa and other members of African America's charter generation as untrustworthy, manipulative, cunning, deceptive, and too smart by a half', '[f]ew European contemporaries thought to apply those epithets to the members of the plantation generation, whom they depicted as dull, dirty, stupid, indolent, libidinous creatures, whose lies could be easily detected and whose attempts to be clever revealed them as both witless and ignorant.' Thus, whites continued to re-define race, using stereotypes to create a framework within which their treatment of African Americans was legitimate and justified. Racist memorabilia are physical manifestations of the evolution of the 'Black image in the White mind', which offer historians and curators a unique opportunity to visually convey the ways that these stereotypes changed over time. See: Ira Berlin, 'American Slavery in History and Memory and the Search for Social Justice', *The Journal of American History* 90.4 (2004), 1251-1268 (p. 1262).

fact, at least one museum—the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia at Ferris State University—is entirely dedicated to teaching visitors about racist stereotypes through the lens of material items. Displays exploring black stereotypes are always powerful and can cause visitors to confront the physical manifestation of racism.

Historian Kenneth W. Goings defines black collectibles as 'items made in or with the image of an African-American' that were 'almost universally derogatory, with exaggerated racial features that helped to "prove" that, indeed, African-Americans were not only different but inferior as well.'[30] According to Goings, these collectibles sold by the tens of thousands in the United States, Europe, and Asia from the 1880s to the late 1950s, and they were generally household goods like toys, games, and kitchen decorations.[31] The most common method used in the museological representation of black stereotypes is displaying the memorabilia itself. This often comes in the form of figurines, though it also includes items like household goods, advertisements, books, and dolls. The three American museums in this study all display a collection of black collectible figurines, and all four institutions host collections of racist memorabilia more generally.[32] Each collection varies in size and scope, but several defining features are notable in all of them: very dark skin, bulging eyes, and an exaggerated grin through huge, red lips.

Often accompanying the figurines in the museum displays are other vehicles of black stereotypes, like advertisements, cards, signs, and children's books. While

[30] Kenneth W. Goings, *Mammy and Uncle Mose: Black Collectibles and American Stereotyping* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. iii.
[31] Ibid.
[32] The risks and benefits of the inclusion of these types of artifacts are debated by museum stakeholders. As referenced previously, Alan Rice details a curatorial debate about the inclusion of a slave model (a doll/figurine made in the 19th century) in the *Trade and Empire* exhibition at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester, England. He explains: 'These objects bring with them many dilemmas for curators. Should we be preserving objects that potentially glorify a racist system that has ramifications for visitors today? As each model will take over £2000 to conserve, can such expense be justified for objects that are so tainted by their ownership and the troubled history of racial representation they exemplify? The curators wanted the exhibition to serve as a starting point for debate on these issues, but realized that the very unveiling of such troubling objects could prove problematic for many visitors.' See: Alan Rice, 'Museums, Memorials and Plantation Houses in the Black Atlantic: Slavery and the Development of Dark Tourism'. In Richard Sharpley and Philip R. Stone (eds), *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism* (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2009), 224-246 (pp. 244-245).

advertisements and figurines captured adult audiences, books like *Little Black Sambo* (NMAAHC; ISM) and *The Golliwogg's Auto-Go-Cart* (NMAAHC) teach visitors that stereotypes were introduced to children at a young age. In the images on these items, characters are depicted doing a variety of things, such as cooking, cleaning, serving white people, dancing, or eating watermelons. Regardless of their actions, they are always intended to appear servile, incompetent, untrustworthy, devious, or barbarous.

Black collectibles, DuSable Museum

Black collectibles, NMAAHC

In addition to black collectibles, collections at BCRI, NMAAHC, and ISM also explore minstrelsy. A thorough examination of this topic provides visitors insight into minstrelsy's immense popularity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As historian Stephen Johnson explains: '[B]lackface minstrelsy became arguably the most widely disseminated and commercially successful entertainment form of the nineteenth century.'[33] *The Complete Minstrel Guide* (1901) provides instructions for blackface performers getting ready for shows:

[33] Stephen Johnson, *Burnt Cork: Traditions and Legacies of Blackface Minstrelsy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), p. 8.

> *When you wish to make up, dip your hands in water, wet your face, neck and ears, then wet your hands, shaking them around in the pail of corks, then rubbing them on your face. By repeating this you will be thoroughly blackened…Leave the lips just as they are, they will appear red to the audience. Comedians leave a wide white space all around the lips. It makes the mouth appear larger and will look red as the lips do. If you wish to represent an old darkey, use white drop chalk, outlining the eyebrows, chin, whiskers or a gray beard.*[34]

The desired physical effects depicted in this guide book are evidenced in minstrel displays at black history museums. Minstrel shows are most often engaged with through contemporary posters, but they are also underpinned by images from the shows and other performance memorabilia. The museums in this study display posters for shows like 'Ain't dat a Shame' (BCRI), 'Golf Crazy Coons' (NMAAHC), and 'Black and White Minstrel Show' (ISM). In addition to these minstrel posters, the NMAAHC collection includes sheet music for songs like 'The Old Contraband' and 'The Coon's Trademark: A Watermelon, Razor, Chicken, and a Coon'. The BCRI examines the theme of minstrelsy further by including information about (and a still from) D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*—a particularly important message about how easily black stereotypes permeated popular culture, further contributing to their normalization. Likewise, the NMAAHC provides added content upstairs in the *Culture Galleries*, which explores blackface and minstrelsy and includes a video of Bert Williams' *A Natural Born Gambler* routine and his signature song 'Nobody'.[35]

In some cases, the inclusion of popular culture can over-emphasize the role of fame and celebrity; however, in the case of black stereotypes, curators can engage with popular

[34] William Courtright, *The Complete Minstrel Guide* (Chicago: The Dramatic Pub. Co, 1901), p. 8. Available online at: <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100837160> [accessed on 1 August 2017].
[35] Bert Williams (b. 1874; d. 1922) was a Bahamian-American comedic actor who often appeared in minstrel shows. While contemporary black reception of Williams was mixed, his legacy has proven more favorable and he is largely remembered for his ground-breaking Broadway career and his ability to subvert racial stereotypes.

culture to highlight the ways that entertainment served as a vehicle for negative racial stereotypes. Just as entertainment was used to spread these ideas to the masses during the 20th century, so too can they be used as education tools in the 21st century. In fact, incorporating popular culture in this way can temper the tendency to idealize fame and direct the historical narrative away from the mundane and ordinary, instead demonstrating how it was used to connect with some ordinary (white) people and tarnish the collective reputation of other ordinary (black) people. For these reasons, using the medium of entertainment to host an authentic discussion about how racial ideas were communicated, reinforced, and maintained will not only attract visitor attention, but will also construct a bridge between the famous, the infamous, and the ordinary.

Museological representations of black stereotypes, collectibles, and minstrelsy largely center on artifact display. This prominent method used to convey what historian George Fredrickson called the 'Black image in the white mind' is powerful.[36] In the process of museological display, the meaning of these artifacts is transformed from items intended to subjugate and mock, to items intended to empower and educate—the same process that takes place in the representation of items originally used to restrain or abuse slaves, or items intended to mark segregated public spaces. In fact, African Americans are the primary collectors of racist memorabilia and they consider this process one that reclaims ownership of these images, exemplifying how the items' ownership by museums or responsible collectors can morph the purpose of sensitive historical items.[37] On the value and empowerment of these objects, Pilgrim notes: 'There is still a debate about whether

[36] George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

[37] Lynn Casmier-Paz, 'Heritage, not Hate? Collecting Black Memorabilia', *Southern Cultures* 9.1 (2003), 43-61. Kenneth W. Goings also comments on black ownership and control of racist memorabilia, explaining: 'When asked why they preserve and study black memorabilia, they replied "If we don't portray it, people won't know how far we've come." Precisely by possessing these objects, black people rob them of their power. Silly and crude these things may have been, but…generations of black people lived in their shadow. The souls of millions of black people were trapped in these heaps of mass-produced junk. Now at least they are being set free.' See: Goings, *Mammy and Uncle Mose*, p. xxiv; cites 'Cookie Jars of Oppression: Shades of Jim Crow Make It Big as Collectibles', *Newsweek* (16 May 1987), pp. 75-76.

Black people should use this material in any way other than to destroy it, or whether they don't belong in a museum or being resold by Black people. This is high-octane material, but the benefits are also high.'[38]

Black stereotype and minstrel display, BCRI

Black stereotype and minstrel display, ISM

Engaging directly with these materials is an effective way of conveying the racist, offensive way that African Americans (and Black British, in the case of the ISM) were dehumanized and commodified. Whether black caricatures were used to fill seats at a minstrel show, teach children about the racial hierarchy, or attract consumers to a variety of products, they were damaging to the African-American psyche and played a central role in legitimizing discrimination and segregation. As such, their historical significance requires museum space in institutions hosting an honest discussion about American history. These items require little annotation and are most powerful when they speak for themselves—a reminder that sometimes artifacts can communicate in ways annotations cannot.

In museums, what content is displayed and how it is displayed determines the direction and tone of each institution's narrative. Another component of narrative development, however, is the way that displays are positioned in relation to one another. In

[38] Lords, 'Keeping Jim Crow Alive', p. 28.

other words, though all the museums in this study use similar methods to display similar content, the way they are positioned along the museum journey creates an experience and a message that is unique to each institution. In the BCRI, the black stereotype display is preceded by the 'Confrontation Room' and succeeded by the *Movement Gallery*. Segregation and black communities are examined thoroughly in a previous gallery, leaving this portion of the museum journey to be interpreted within a wider exploration of how whites (and segregationists, in particular) thought of African Americans—a powerful foundation for the subsequent civil rights gallery. The DuSable's engagement with stereotypes is brief, but its placement among displays examining segregation and the Great Migration results in a localized narrative wherein migratory patterns fuelled white supremacist ideologies in the North, leading to segregation, discrimination, stereotyping, and violence.

The NMAAHC hosts the most extensive black stereotype collection in this study. Interesting in its own right, the museum's engagement with black stereotypes is made even more powerful through the display's positioning near others exploring black communities and black intellectualism. The themes of brilliance and strength starkly contrast from the caricatures exhibited in the black collectible and minstrel displays. Finally, the ISM examines stereotypes through a transatlantic lens that challenges visitors to think of racism outside of the traditional American framework. Around the stereotype display are items and photographs further examining segregation, discrimination, and violence in both Liverpool and America—a continuation of the unique approach in which local and international are woven together in one cohesive narrative.

Though these displays are educational and sobering, some additions may further enhance visitor understanding of this contentious topic. For example, it would be interesting if museums encouraged visitors to analyze collectibles from the earliest years of Reconstruction to their twilight years in the 1950s. By doing this, visitors will see that

depictions of African Americans reflected the white perception of them over time, and, as such, reached the height of grotesque offensiveness from the 1880s to the 1930s—the apex of segregation, racial violence, and lynching.[39] Perhaps the most perplexing omission of this information is in the NMAAHC, where—for an unidentified reason—the black stereotype display is split into two parts (in addition to the aforementioned minstrel display in the *Culture Galleries*). The larger part of the stereotypes display is positioned earlier in the museum journey and appears alongside displays examining community building, the crafting of black culture, and black intellectualism; the exploration of black stereotypes then returns briefly in the beginning of the civil rights era display area. This separation provides an opportunity to discuss the volatility of these stereotypes and what they tell us about race relations at that particular time. As it stands, however, the separation seems unexplained and disjointed.

In addition to this timeline consideration, the incorporation of audio/audio visual displays playing clips from minstrel shows (particularly *Birth of a Nation*) or audio of contemporary 'coon songs' would greatly complement existing displays. The video playing in the *Culture Galleries* at the NMAAHC is effective, but its separation from the core displays exploring stereotypes in *Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom* results in a slightly decontextualized narrative—a risk when museums host both chronological and thematic galleries. Finally, all these displays would benefit from information about stereotyping by omission. The ISM's temporary exhibition 'Afro Supa Hero' engaged with this topic by celebrating black role models and heroes, and more permanent examinations of the ways that positive figures were always depicted as white would further contribute to visitors' nuanced understanding of stereotypes.[40]

[39] Goings, *Mammy and Uncle Mose*, p. xxi.
[40] 'Afro Supa Hero', *International Slavery Museum* <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/exhibitions/afro-supa-hero/> [accessed 1 September 2017].

CONCLUSION

Like slavery, the era of Jim Crow contains some of the most extreme elements of American history. Images of lynching and angry white mobs dominate the popular understanding of the period, as Americans rightly denounce the segregation that shaped the first half of the 20th century. While these aspects of Jim Crow are important to remember, museums can also create displays that educate visitors about the more mundane—but no less traumatic—impacts of segregation. By engaging with the less tangible side of Jim Crow history—for example, by representing not just physical wounds but also emotional scars, not just violent and vocal segregationists but moderate ones, not just the most overt black stereotypes but also the subtle association of black with negative qualities—museums can flesh out visitors' understanding of Jim Crow, creating a more comprehensive tapestry of a complex era. When balanced, authentic narratives of the period are presented in displays, visitors will be encouraged to consider Jim Crow in its entirety, as well as the ways decades of *de jure* and *de facto* segregation shaped our modern society.

CIVIL RIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

For many visiting black history museums, civil rights—along with slavery—is likely to be the most familiar era represented. The period's recognizability is widespread: those who were too young to have been there have lived through these years vicariously through history classes, shared memories from older generations, or representations of the era in popular culture; those who are old enough to have experienced the movement consider it in a personalized way, associating their contemporary thoughts, feelings, and experiences with civil rights events. Perhaps due to this familiarity, a dissonance often arises between collective memory and history. This section will examine representations of civil rights with a particular emphasis on these disparities, questioning how museums navigate the gaps between history and memory. It will do so by analyzing the engagement of the DuSable, BCRI, NMAAHC, and ISM with civil rights timelines, the idea of the 'Great Man', methods of localization and internationalization, women, the media, justice and injustice, and the federal government. In doing so, this section will not only consider how these topics are examined in black history museums, but also how these representations are impacted by location and why they are relevant to our modern world.

FROM MONTGOMERY TO MEMPHIS

The debate between adherents to the Short Movement and Long Movement theories is ongoing and ever evolving. While some scholars believe that the study of civil rights needs to be re-focused on the years 1954-68, others argue that the scope should be broadened to include more time and space.[41] When the public remembers the civil rights era, they

[41] For more on the debate regarding the civil rights timeline, see for example: Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, 'The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past', *The Journal of American History* 91.4 (2005), 1233-1263; Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, 'The "Long Movement" as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies', *The Journal of African American History* 92.2 (2007), 265-288.

usually frame it within the *Brown*/Montgomery-to-Memphis timeline. Historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall explains that the narrative central to the Short Movement theory holds strong in public memory 'in part because they have been repeated so often and broadcast so widely, and in part because they avoid uncomfortable questions about the relationship between cumulative white advantage and present social ills.'[42] Because this narrative fits more comfortably within public memory, it is also the more recognizable method for curators framing the period in museum displays. Though the Short Movement timeline may be familiar to visitors, further engagement with the Long Movement would consider the civil rights era in a broader context, encouraging visitors to expand the framework in which they envision the period.

While it is important to question which interpretation museums are using in their civil rights representations, the timelines are sometimes difficult to detect because chronological and thematic exhibits tend to flow together, not always indicating that a particular event should be considered the end of one era or the beginning of another. On the other hand, sometimes placards or signs clearly indicate categorized periods, making it easier for visitors to determine exactly when the museum considers civil rights efforts to have commenced and concluded. It is also possible for museums to engage with both theories, allowing visitors to come to their own conclusions. Though it can be difficult to determine how a museum interprets the civil rights timeline, the framing of this era can reveal important information about each institution's overall civil rights narrative.

Some museums in this study distinguish between eras quite clearly, but displays at the DuSable and ISM flow from one period to the next with little indication of a categorized timeline. Because of these elongated layouts, it is not clear when exactly the civil rights portion of the museum begins and ends.[43] This is made more complicated by

[42] Hall, 'The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past', p. 1262.
[43] In a way, the temporal framing in these institutions seems appropriate in its reflection of the actual civil rights era, the timeline of which is still debated by historians.

evidence of engagement with both the Short and Long Movement theories. In the DuSable, the period is referred to as the 'Civil Rights Movement' and the 'Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s'. Similarly, the ISM highlights the specific years of 1954-60, a period during which, according to a placard, 'the campaign for Civil Rights gains momentum and segregation legislation is successfully challenged by Rosa Parks and others.' This use of terminology (as opposed to the grassroots-focused 'civil rights movements') and the reference to specific years (the 1960s in the DuSable and 1954-60 in the ISM) subtly suggests that these museums adhere to the era's definition as one national civil rights effort during the 1950s and 1960s—an indicator of the Short Movement.

The 'Fight for Freedom and Equality' display, ISM

Despite this, both museums also allude to the broader framework of the Long Movement timeline. The DuSable includes a small display on A. Phillip Randolph and the organization of the March on Washington in 1941—work that curators note 'paved the way' for activism of the 1960s. As argued by historians like August Meier, Elliot Rudwick, and Richard Dalfiume—early supporters of the Long Movement theory before it was known as such—the activist spirit of the 1940s should be considered a foundation for the efforts of subsequent decades.[44] With the mention of 1940s activism, then, the DuSable

[44] August Meier and Elliot M. Rudwick, *From Plantation to Ghetto: An Interpretive History of American Negroes* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966); Richard Dalfiume, 'The "Forgotten Years" of the Negro Revolution', *The Journal of American History* 55 (1968), 90-106.

implicitly elongates its civil rights timeline. The ISM approaches the idea of the long civil rights movement somewhat differently by including information about the civil rights era on the 'Fight for Freedom and Equality' display, which spans from 1807 to 2001. While civil rights itself is defined in the specific period of 1954-60, it is positioned alongside events that preceded and succeeded those years, including the abolition of slavery, Jim Crow, and the legacy of racism. Through these subtle methods, both the DuSable and the ISM frame the 'classical' phase of civil rights in a broader tapestry of 20th century events.[45]

While the DuSable and ISM seem to temper a Short Movement focus with a more contextualized consideration of 20th century race relations, the BCRI quite clearly positions civil rights within the timeframe of 1954-65. The beginning of the civil rights era is contextualized by a video and the *Barriers Gallery*, but civil rights itself—examined exclusively in the *Movement Gallery*—is considered through the Short Movement lens.[46] An introductory placard in *Movement* identifies *Brown* as the dawn of the era; meanwhile, the gallery concludes with the Selma to Montgomery marches and the resulting Voting Rights Act.[47]

In his analysis of the BCRI, historian Glenn Eskew writes that in order to make the institute's dark narratives 'palatable', it had to adopt the 'Whiggish progressivism of the American master narrative, with a message that celebrates the moral righteousness of

[45] As stated in footnote 141 of the introductory chapter, the 'classical' phase of the civil rights era begins at either the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision 1954 or the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955 and concludes with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination in 1968. See: Bayard Rustin, *Down the Line: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), p. 111.
[46] The video—shown in a theatre—is a mandatory starting point for all BCRI visitors and provides an overview of black history in Alabama up to the 20th century. The screen then rises and visitors enter *Barriers*, a gallery outlining Jim Crow and the power of black communities during this period of segregation.
[47] Though some modern issues (the mayoral administration of Richard Arrington and other influential black Alabamians in the post-civil rights era, as well as international human rights issues) are explored before visitors leave the museum, it is clear that the civil rights coverage ends in 1965.

nonviolent protest, the potential interracial unity, and the success of qualified integration.'[48]

He continues:

> *The chronology presented in the museum charts a particularly narrow trajectory. It defines the early 1960s as the key years of the struggle and events in Birmingham with the subsequent adoption of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as the climax of the civil rights movement all framed within the standard Montgomery to Memphis refrain. The victory over white supremacy presupposes the triumph of tolerance and the fulfilment of King's dream of assimilation, goals married to a master narrative of America's history that charts an ever-expanding democracy.*[49]

Similarly, communications scholar Victoria J. Gallagher writes:

> *The physical layout, lighting, and thematic progression of the museum evoke a move from darkness into light, from the oppression of segregation to the accomplishments of citizens, from the specific circumstances of Birmingham to a global sensibility and kinship. Thus Birmingham is transformed from "Bombingham" to an "All American City" that remembers its past…and has learned and continues to learn from it.*[50]

Indeed, it could be argued that this cropped view of the civil rights era provides a limited trajectory, in which activism arose sporadically in the 1950s and racial barriers were destroyed after 1965.[51] In this light, the timeline reinforces what Eskew has termed the 'Won Cause', situating the civil rights era within a limited framework that perpetuates the myth that civil rights were ultimately 'won' in 1965.[52]

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[48] Glenn Eskew, 'Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the New Ideology of Tolerance'. In Leigh Raiford and Renee Christine Romano (eds), *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 28-66 (p. 29).

[49] Ibid, pp. 52-53.

[50] Victoria J. Gallagher, 'Memory and Reconciliation in the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute', *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 2.2 (1999), 303-320 (p. 315).

[51] The BCRI's current mission statement, however, demonstrates an awareness of current racism and inequality. It reads: 'To enlighten each generation about civil and human rights by exploring our common past and working together in the present to build a better future.' The subtle acknowledgement of current issues (presumably a symptom of the need to 'build a better future') seems to mark a commitment to understanding America's past and working toward equality in a present that continues to be plagued by racism. See: 'About the BCRI', *Birmingham Civil Rights Institute* <http://www.bcri.org./information/aboutbcri.html> [accessed on 30 January 2017].

[52] Glenn T. Eskew, *The Won Cause: Memorializing the Movement through the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute* (Atlanta: Georgia State University, 1998). In the second edition of his King biography, Peter Ling explains the 'Won Cause' myth: 'Whereas once the white South cultivated the myth of the "Lost Cause" to

Thus, the timeline of the BCRI feels cropped on either end of the museum journey. While the institute's introductory video and *Barriers* contextualizes much of the civil rights narrative, it would be constructive to include examples of earlier activism. This omission was mentioned by at least one visitor who wrote: 'My only disappointment was that they did not have enough information on the impact of the Second World War to the civil rights movement.'[53] Most people who mention the institute's timeline, however, express disappointment with the lack of information about post-1965 race relations. They write: 'The weakest aspect was coverage of the aftermath—there's a bit, but not much on what has happened since as a result of these events'; 'The only [thing] that I was a little disappointed with was the abrupt end of the museum's narrative….The exhibit is extremely detailed for the 5 or so years that Birmingham was active in the movement, but it ends really abruptly after 1963 (early!)….The effect was to squander away all of the energy I had built up throughout the exhibit'; 'It kind of peters out at the end, though. I felt like it left me hanging.'[54] Though these and similar commenters still raved about the overall quality of the museum—and despite the fact that most reviewers did not mention the short timeline—the ending does feel abrupt. By ending the narrative in 1965, the BCRI misses an opportunity to educate visitors about the under-acknowledged twilight years of

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ennoble their Civil War memories, with largely uncritical support from the mainstream media, it has now developed the myth of the "Won Cause" with King at its heroic center in a narrative that stresses the progress made. King can be sanctified in this account because its implicit message is that the past is past.' See: Peter J. Ling, *Martin Luther King, Jr.* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 315 (see pages 315-322 for Ling's juxtaposing of the 'Won Cause' myth, the Reagan administration, and the realities of black America in the post-civil rights period); Owen J. Dwyer, 'Memory on the Margins: *Alabama's Civil Rights Journey* as a Memorial Text'. In Stephen P. Hanna and Vincent J. Del Casino Jr. (eds), *Mapping Tourism* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 28-50 (pp. 37-40).

[53] *TripAdvisor* (13 July 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r392351633-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 20 August 2016].

[54] *TripAdvisor* (4 November 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r434710344-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 8 January 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (5 January 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r337639435-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 20 July 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (12 May 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r271686727-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 20 August 2016].

the civil rights era. As a result, issues like King's later campaigns, his assassination, the rise of black power, and the legacy of civil rights activism are neglected.

While the BCRI's adherence to the Short Movement timeline enables curators to provide extensive details about the classical stage of the era, it can also strip King of his more controversial stances on issues like poverty, foreign policy, and northern racism—a sterilized image of King that tends to dominate collective memory of the era.[55] In contrast, these later years are included in the DuSable's civil rights displays; for example, curators reference a 1964 speech delivered by King in Chicago, King's participation in the Chicago Freedom Movement, and a reference to the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers' strike.[56] Though these events are not covered extensively (the entire civil rights portion of the museum is strikingly brief), the engagement with King's later years educates visitors about his lesser-known campaigns and beliefs.[57]

Of the museums in this study, the NMAAHC seems to engage most with the Long Movement timeline—particularly in its elongating of the beginning of the era. *Defending Freedom*, *Defining Freedom* frames civil rights between 1945 and 1968, considering the

[55] For more on the sterilization of King, see for example: Vincent Gordon Harding, 'Beyond Amnesia: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Future of America', *Journal of American History* 74 (1987), 468-476; Clayborne Carson, 'Martin Luther King, Jr.: Charismatic Leadership in a Mass Struggle', *The Journal of American History* 74.2 (1987), 448-454; Michael Eric Dyson, *I May Not Get There With You: The True Martin Luther King, Jr* (New York: Free Press, 2000); Edward P. Morgan, 'The Good, the Bad, and the Forgotten: Media Culture and Public Memory of the Civil Rights Movement'. In Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford (eds) *The Civil Rights Movement in American History* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2006), 137-166; Kevin Bruyneel, 'The King's Body: The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial and the Politics of Collective Memory', *History & Memory* 26.1 (2014), 75-108; Ling, *Martin Luther King, Jr.* (2015), pp. 335-338; Cornel West, 'Martin Luther King Jr was a radical. We must not sterilize his legacy', *The Guardian* (4 April 2018) <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/apr/04/martin-luther-king-cornel-west-legacy> [accessed on 11 August 2018].

[56] For more on King's northern efforts, see for example: James Ralph, *Northern Protest: Martin Luther King, Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980* (New York: Palgrave, 2003).

[57] In the first edition of his biography of Dr. King, Peter Ling writes: '…I contend that the Martin Luther King who emerges from the later struggles is the more heroic figure, as a leader striving to develop his ability to address injustice and as someone prepared to face the price of unpopularity and isolation.' With this in mind, the fact that King's later years are so under-explored is particularly concerning as they offer what some believe to be the years of King's greatest heroisms. See: Peter J. Ling, *Martin Luther King, Jr.* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 5.

post-war years a significant period leading up to the core civil rights activism of the 1950s and 1960s. This framing aligns with historian C. Vann Woodward's idea of the Second Reconstruction—a term he used to describe the years between 1945 and 1968.[58] The NMAAHC's World War II displays highlight the changing dynamics of this period, pointing to the planned March on Washington in 1941 and the Double Victory campaign as evidence of increasing black consciousness. Moreover, though the civil rights exhibit focuses on the 'Modern Civil Rights Movement', effort has clearly been made to steep these events in historical contextualization. For example, in a display about public transportation boycotts, the museum introduces the Montgomery boycott by highlighting the earlier protests of segregated transportation in several southern cities—some reaching as far back as 1900. This contextualization results in a flowing narrative that identifies earlier (pre-1954) displays of activism when explaining the successes of the 1950s and 1960s.

Whether museums adhere to the Short Movement or Long Movement timeline, it is interesting to note that neither the BCRI nor the DuSable engage with the assassination of King. This historic event is missing entirely from displays at the BCRI—a by-product, perhaps, of a timeline ending in 1965. The DuSable briefly mentions his assassination, though it does so indirectly. In an annotation for the sanitation strike display, the museum acknowledges that it was this specific event that brought King to Memphis days before he was assassinated. Other than this indirect acknowledgement, the DuSable does nothing to represent the assassination.

[58] One of the earliest references of this term came from C. Vann Woodward who, writing in the mid-1950s, observed: 'Yet in the face of apparent solidarity of Southern resistance to change, a resistance that continues to receive firm and eloquent expression in some quarters, it has become increasingly plain that another era of change is upon the South and that the changes achieved or demanded are in the very area traditionally held most inviolable to alteration. Not since the First Reconstruction has this area been invaded from so many quarters, with such impatience of established practice and such insistent demand for immediate reform. Beginning about two decades ago, but reaching full momentum only in the decade since the Second World War, the New Reconstruction shows no signs of having yet run its course or even of having slackened its pace.' C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 9.

Both the NMAAHC and the ISM venture into this sensitive topic. The NMAAHC addresses King's death very briefly in the end of *Defending Freedom*, *Defining Freedom*, and the event is represented at length in *A Changing America: 1968 and Beyond*. Information about the reactions to his death and the impact of the assassination are accompanied by a video of the funeral procession, along with funeral and memorial service memorabilia. This display provides a unique perspective of King's death, focusing less on the individual loss of King and more on the societal and cultural impact of his assassination. The ISM presents King's assassination in a film that documents 20th century events, ranging from African liberation movements in Ghana and South Africa to civil rights and black power activism in America. A fair amount of footage is devoted to King, culminating in the emotional news coverage of his assassination and funeral. In both of these museums, the use of primary footage to convey the tragic nature of his assassination is highly effective and allows visitors to consider the assassination in a contemporary framework rather than learning about the event through the more stagnant mediums of photographs and annotations.[59]

Interestingly, none of these exhibits mention James Earl Ray by name nor do they explore conspiracies surrounding King's death. This omission may be due to the fact that many of King's family members believe that the United States government played a role in his assassination and that Ray was used as a scapegoat.[60] Because this case was ultimately

[59] It is interesting that both museums that engage with King's assassination do so through the use of media. This method—which transports visitors back to April 4, 1968 visually, mentally, and emotionally—is as close as these museums can get to the visitor experience at the actual site of the murder, the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel. At the National Civil Rights Museum, the civil rights galleries downstairs serve as the crescendo, and visitors end their journey looking through the glass at rooms 306 and 307—preserved as they were on the day of King's death—as well as the infamous balcony on which King was shot. As Bernard J. Armada describes: 'We can, for a moment, *be* King—we can look out past the balcony and imagine that what we are seeing is what King last saw.' This driver's seat approach to King's assassination—whether through the glass in Memphis or through footage in Washington, D.C. and Liverpool—ties these three institutions together, each offering visitors a glimpse into a day of tragedy. See: Bernard J. Armada, 'Memorial Agon: An Interpretative Tour of the National Civil Rights Museum', *Southern Journal of Communication* 63.3 (1998), 235-243 (p. 240).

[60] For more about the uncertainties surrounding King's death, see for example: William B. Huie, *He Slew the Dreamer: My Search, With James Earl Ray, for the Truth About the Murder of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Montgomery: Black Belt Press, 1997); James Earl Ray, *Who Killed Martin Luther King, Jr.? The True Story by*

dismissed by the Justice Department due to lack of evidence, museums may prefer not to mention the issue at all so as not to side with either the Kings (who, judicially speaking, are lacking in evidence) or the government (which may complicate federal funding and support). It is also possible that omitting Ray from these displays is a conscious decision made by curators who do not want to award him celebrity status, preferring instead to keep the focus on King's work and ideologies. Additionally, museum professionals may be wary of alienating King's surviving family members, some of whom have made guest appearances at black history museum events in the past.[61]

ONE 'GREAT MAN' OR AN ARMY OF ACTIVISTS?

In a 1987 article entitled 'Martin Luther King, Jr: Charismatic Leadership in a Mass Struggle', historian/King biographer Clayborne Carson summarized the idea of the 'Great Man' that explained the way the public remembers King's role in the civil rights era. This 'Great Man' paradigm, as Carson explains, 'departs from historical reality because it attributes too much to King's exceptional qualities as a leader and too little to the impersonal, large-scale social factors that made it possible for King to display his singular abilities on a national stage.'[62] The major issue with the Great Man paradigm is that it focuses so much on individual leaders (usually King himself) that it neglects major

the Alleged Assassin (New York: Marlowe, 1997); Gerald Posner, *Killing the Dream: James Earl Ray and the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (London: Little, Brown, 1998).

[61] For example, in 2012 Martin Luther King III visited the ISM and gave the memorial lecture on the eve of Slavery Remembrance Day. In 2018 King III and his daughter Yolanda participated in the 55th anniversary of the Children's Crusade in Birmingham, an event locally organized by the BCRI. 'Martin Luther King III', *National Museums Liverpool* <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/srd/martin-luther-king.aspx> [accessed on 30 May 2018]; Dennis Pillon, 'Marchers to commemorate 1963 Children's Crusade protest this weekend in Birmingham', *AL.com* (4 May 2018) <https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/05/alabama_gop_condemns_psc_candi.html> [accessed on 30 May 2018].

[62] Carson, 'Martin Luther King, Jr.', pp. 448-449.

contributors to the movement like organizations, foot soldiers, and local leaders.[63] As Clayborne argues:

> *King was certainly not the only significant leader of the civil rights movement, for sustained protest movements arose in many southern communities in which King had little or no direct involvement.*[64]

This sentiment has also been argued by historian/King biographer Peter Ling, who writes:

> *Without the activities of the Movement, most of which he did not control or orchestrate, Martin Luther King might well have been no more than just another black Baptist preacher who spoke well.*[65]

Therefore, when King is remembered as a figure who was central to the movement's ultimate success, local grassroots efforts—the real key to success in the era—are undervalued. As a result, those who consider the civil rights era through the Great Man lens may over-emphasize King's actual role in the civil rights era and misunderstand the vital importance of local communities, organizers, and activists.

Despite the incorporation of grassroots efforts in civil rights historiography in recent decades, the idea of the Great Man remains deeply embedded in the collective memory of the era. Dwyer attributes this King-centric public focus to the commemoration of major events from his life in cities like Atlanta, Birmingham, Selma, and Memphis, Martin Luther King Day, and countless public place names that honor his legacy.[66] While King's role in the era should not be underappreciated, the lack of credit given to local leaders, organizers, and activists can skew our understanding of socio-political movements.[67] Scholars Leigh Raiford and Renee C. Romano explain:

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[63] The Great Man paradigm also marginalizes stories about women in the civil rights era, which will be explored later in this chapter.
[64] Carson, 'Martin Luther King, Jr.', p. 450.
[65] Ling only applies this line of argument to the pre-1965 King and writes that in his final years King became truly 'heroic'. Ling, *Martin Luther King, Jr.* (2002), p. 2.
[66] Dwyer, 'Interpreting the Civil Rights Movement', pp. 10-11.
[67] For this reason, it was symbolic when President Obama recognized the work of 'those ordinary people whose names never appeared in the history books, never got on TV' in a speech commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the March on Washington. 'FULL TRANSCRIPT: President Obama's speech on the 50th

> *The dominant narratives about King and Parks do not focus on how people worked together to achieve social change; they tell the story of singular, extraordinary individuals who made history by acting in ways that are consistent with longstanding American values. Lost in the process are the organizations that stood behind the individuals, the many individuals who acted but who are not famous, and most significantly, the sense that ordinary people cannot change their lives unless they have a great, almost superhuman, leader to guide them.*[68]

With these key factors in mind, it is interesting to observe whether museums take the opportunity to redirect the spotlight away from King and toward the era's many non-famous figures. When this is achieved museums have a real opportunity to not only correct historical misunderstandings in this area, but also to inspire and empower a new generation of activists.

An effective way for curators to avoid narratives that focus solely on King is to emphasize civil rights organizations, organizers, and activists. The BCRI, NMAAHC, and DuSable engage with these themes to varying extents. The three museums explore groups like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), correlating each group to their accomplishments. It is these accomplishments, rather than the groups themselves, that tend to receive the most attention. Using protests, marches, and specific events—such as the lunch counter sit-ins, the Freedom Rides, and the March on Washington—curators explore the organizers and activists that made the civil rights era effective. These displays range in size and effectiveness, but many of the same topics are incorporated in each institution.

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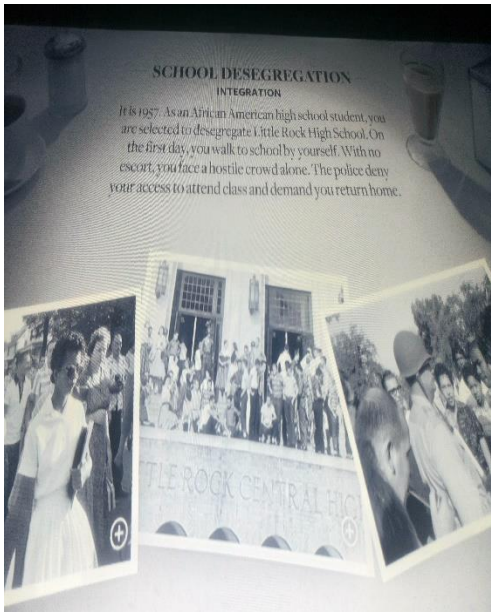
anniversary of the March on Washington', *The Washington Post* (28 August 2013) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/transcript-president-obamas-speech-on-the-50th-anniversary-of-the-march-on-washington/2013/08/28/0138e01e-0ffb-11e3-8cdd-bcdc09410972_story.html?utm_term=.eacab42a7c4f> [accessed on 7 July 2018].

[68] Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford, 'Introduction'. In Renee C. Romano and Leigh Raiford (eds), *The Civil Rights Movement in American History* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2006), xi-xxiv (p. xix).

Sit-in movement display, DuSable Museum

Two displays (one in the NMAAHC and one in the BCRI) are particularly powerful and warrant independent explanation. After NMAAHC visitors walk through the display area in *Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom*, they emerge in an open room from which they can look over the balcony and see the 'Paradox of Liberty' display below and the Declaration of Independence wall inscription directly ahead. A large screen dominates the wall, playing a montage of demonstration photos with quotations such as 'we are tired of seeing our people locked up in jail'. A long lunch counter wraps around this screen, and visitors sit on stools to either watch this video or explore the various options on the smaller screen in front of them. These smaller interactive screens offer visitors a 'menu of movements'. From here, visitors can click on sit-ins, the Freedom Rides, bus boycotts, school desegregation, marches, black power, or grassroots leadership to learn more about these movements. These paths include information about the topic and offer visitors a unique way to learn about civil rights efforts through the eyes of the participants.

Lunch counter display, NMAAHC



Interactive screens in front of each stool teach visitors about the civil rights era, NMAAHC

Many visitors referenced the lunch counter display, deeming it a memorable highlight in the museum: 'The lunch counter exhibit is the best visitor-interactive museum exhibit I've ever encountered. Well-imagined and implemented.'; 'The "Lunch Counter" interactive display took a while to go through but it was my favorite.'; 'The "lunch counter" is a history lesson in itself.'[69] Indeed, this is a powerful moment on the museum journey and, perhaps because it stands apart from the rest of the gallery, it boldly attracts the attention by contrasting the more congested displays that precede it. Here, visitors have an opportunity to sit down at the lunch counter, watch the montage, read the information in front of them, and reflect on what they have learned about civil rights. In this display (and in the NMAAHC more broadly), King takes a backseat to ordinary activists, organizations, and local leaders.

[69] *TripAdvisor* (8 April 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r473619353-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 10 July 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (17 June 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r493865248-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 10 July 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (8 March 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r465581823-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 10 July 2017].

The BCRI also uses a unique display to explore ordinary people during the civil rights era. Early in *Movement*, visitors walk down a hallway with windows and doors on either side. When the visitor presses a button at each display, the window or door lights up and a conversation is played from nearby speakers. The first window reveals a conversation between a child and his mother concerning segregation, dignity, and the bus boycott. Next in the walkway is a door to Forrest & Sons Funeral Parlor, through which visitors hear a private conversation between Louis and Ethel (presumably a married couple) who are discussing the civil rights meetings Ethel has been attending—most recently, the Women's Political Council's bus boycott meetings. Louis supports these efforts to help 'our people', but because he also serves as a school principal he is concerned that he will be fired when the school board finds out about Ethel's involvement. The button for the final door plays a conversation at a diner called Percy's Place, in which Percy counters his customers' skepticism about the potential effectiveness and organization of civil rights activism. In the end, Percy decides that he will attend a civil rights meeting, shutting the diner early for the evening. These displays make the characters come to life and encourage visitors to appreciate those whose names do not appear in textbooks but nonetheless played an active role in shaping the era.

Forrest & Sons, BCRI

Percy's Place, BCRI

These three audio exhibits demonstrate different levels of enthusiasm for—and confidence in—the civil rights struggle. This authentic message dispels the myth that black Americans experienced segregation and the fight for equality in a homogenous manner, and teaches visitors that attitudes toward activism and extent of involvement varied from person to person. The grassroots focus—underpinned by an emphasis on the diversity of ideas—is a powerful statement that honors the foot soldiers and organizers of the movement, highlighting the various risks that average people took to fight for their freedoms. Moreover, this approach also challenges the popular Great Man theory by educating visitors about the power of the masses, and this seems to have a positive impact on visitor experiences.

Responding to the displays, visitors write: 'Not your average Hollywood…stars, but ordinary, everyday people who took on amazing and potent challenges, handling them with great courage and selflessness….At the museum, you will find many unsung [heroes]…who changed the course of history'; '[The displays] drove the point that a…movement's success hinges more on the little, ordinary people than [on] the heroes and persuasive leaders.'[70] These responses are a significant improvement from the institute's early feedback, in which critics argued that too much emphasis was placed on leadership and not enough on foot soldiers.[71] Years later it is clear that the BCRI has distanced itself from this early criticism, and several changes over the years have resulted in a narrative

[70] *TripAdvisor* (16 December 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r333380212-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 20 August 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (2 September 2014) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r226522481-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 20 August 2016].

[71] Dwyer, 'Interpreting the Civil Rights Movement', p. 14. Fore examples of this criticism in contemporary news coverage, see: 'St. Paul Played Significant Part, Wants History Told', *Birmingham News* (15 November 1992); Marcel Hopson, 'The Unfinished Agenda Must Now Include Roll Call of Unnamed "Footsoldiers"', *Birmingham World* (9 December 1992); Nick Patterson, 'Civil Rights Activists Want Stories Told', *Birmingham Post-Herald* (16 February 1993).

that prioritizes the ordinary over the spectacular by centering on local leaders, organizers, and activists.

In these displays—as well as many others—the BCRI and NMAAHC acknowledge ordinary experiences and people in the civil rights era. Whether these museum narratives focus more on communities and activists (BCRI) or organizations and events (NMAAHC), they effectively counter the King-centric narrative that sometimes overshadow the importance of local institutions. While King is not entirely absent from these institutions, he does not dominate the narrative and visitors are encouraged to consider the ways that ordinary people contributed to civil rights activism. Because these focuses on organizations and activists are so effective in the BCRI and NMAAHC, it is surprising that the DuSable does not do more to engage with these types of themes. Instead, as explored later in this section, King dominates the narrative, leaving little room for grassroots interpretations of the period. Including more about communities, organizations, activists, or grassroots events would help the DuSable's narrative better balance its civil rights framework between the famous and spectacular on one hand, and the non-famous and ordinary on the other.

Dr. King bust, DuSable Museum

1964 Illinois rally flyer, DuSable Museum

In addition to examining organizations and foot soldiers, keeping the focus on grassroots, local civil rights activism lends itself better to the highlighting of local and national (but lesser-known) leaders whose legacies have been dwarfed by a King-centric popular memory. The NMAAHC achieves this most effectively and the focus on other leaders of the period—such as Bayard Rustin, John Lewis, and Malcolm X—feels refreshing.[72] Notably, a Rosa Parks display—which centers on a dress that was being made by Parks at the time of her arrest—credits the previous efforts of Claudette Colvin.[73] Throughout this gallery, annotations also celebrate the contributions of leaders like Jo Ann Robinson, Fred Gray, and Fred Shuttlesworth—and many others are recognized in photographs.[74] The inclusion of these lesser-known civil rights leaders presents another

[72] Bayard Rustin (b. 1912; d. 1987) was a civil rights leader and organizer who advocated for racial equality, nonviolence, socialism, and gay rights; John Lewis (b. 1940) has been a US Congressman (D-GA) since 1987 and was formerly a civil rights leader who served as the chairman of SNCC and was famously assaulted during the Freedom Rides; Malcolm X (b. 1925; d. 1965) was a leading voice in the shift from King's nonviolence toward black power's militaristic style, as well as a vocal advocate of the Nation of Islam until his split with the group in 1964.

[73] At 15 years old, Claudette Colvin (b. 1939) refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger in Montgomery nine months before Rosa Parks became famous for the same act. While Parks went on to become one of the most celebrated civil rights figures, Colvin was abandoned by civil rights leaders when she became pregnant the following year. Though this display is a good start, perhaps more space devoted to Colvin would provide an opportunity for the museum to discuss the ways that leaders wanted to brand the movement, consciously cultivating a particular image that would appeal to broad audiences. For more on Colvin, see for example: Phillip Hoose, *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010).

[74] Jo Ann Robinson (b. 1912; d. 1992) was a civil rights activist and teacher who is best known for her role in organizing and executing the Montgomery bus boycott. Fred Gray (b. 1930) is a preacher, former elected representative, and lawyer who defended Claudette Colvin and Rosa Parks and handled major civil rights cases dealing with voting rights, the NCAAP, school integration, and the Tuskegee syphilis experiment. Fred Shuttlesworth (b. 1922; d. 2011) was a minister and civil rights leader who co-founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and led the fight to overturn segregation laws in Birmingham (and the South more broadly). It should be noted that the small display on Daisy Bates provides an opportunity to discuss Elizabeth Eckford and Hazel Bryan (Hazel became infamous when a photographer captured her yelling at Elizabeth, one of the Little Rock Nine), particularly after the publication of David Margolick's captivating *Elizabeth and Hazel: Two Women of Little Rock*. See: David Margolick, *Elizabeth and Hazel: Two Women of Little Rock* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011). For more on Robinson, Gray, and Shuttlesworth, see for example: David J. Garrow (ed.), *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It; The Memoir of Jo Ann Gibson Robinson* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987); Fred Gray, *Bus Ride to Justice: The Life and Works of Fred Gray* (Montgomery: Black Belt Press, 1995); Andrew Manis, *A Fire You Can't Put Out: The Civil Rights Life of Birmingham's Fred Shuttlesworth* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999).

opportunity for visitors to learn about the many figures of leadership during the struggle for equality.[75]

Engagement with King varies in the three American museums in this study. In the DuSable, for example, King dominates the civil rights narrative. His image frequents this part of the exhibit, appearing on flyers, photographs, and a bust in a glass case. In fact, this narrative is so King-centric that even a display on the Memphis sanitation workers' strike fails to mention the strikers. While an image shows the workers, the accompanying placard merely states that this strike brought King to Memphis days before his assassination. It does not explain why the workers were striking, who organized the strike, what the demands were, or whether the strike was effective.[76] In a similar vein, the ISM's short engagement with civil rights emphasizes the work of the era's primary leaders more than that of grassroots activists.[77] While grassroots efforts are not entirely overlooked (they are referenced in a Malcolm X quotation and can be seen in a rolling film), they are not overtly explored in any displays. However, unlike the DuSable, activists are not dwarfed by King, but rather by the broad scope of time and place in *Legacy*.

It should be noted that the absence of foot soldiers in the ISM should not be treated the same as their absence in a museum like the DuSable. There are several reasons why the ISM's focus on more prominent figures is appropriate. First, the primary focus of the museum is slavery and the slave trade. Because of this, *Legacy* is not meant to provide a detailed year-by-year, country-by-country account of 1807-present, but rather a general understanding of the struggle for racial equality over a span of two centuries. Furthermore,

[75] This is not to imply that some of these leaders—most notably Parks and Malcolm X—are underappreciated. In these cases, however, exploration of the two figures in museum displays allows visitors to learn more about figures that, though incredibly famous, are arguably side-lined for King elsewhere.

[76] This omission is a symptom of a broader issue—a lack of engagement with class during the civil rights era. This is not unique to DuSable, and all the museums in this study could do more to examine this dynamic.

[77] It should be noted that the museum has purchased an adjacent building—what they call the Martin Luther King Jr building—and plans to expand the museum into this building will proceed when funding can be secured. See: 'Future Plans', *International Slavery Museum* <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/about/future-plans.aspx> [accessed on 20 November 2018].

because the museum does not focus primarily on America and opts for an international understanding of the African diaspora, *Legacy* highlights 20th century black history in several countries, leading to briefer, but more geographically-broadened engagements with major events.

Finally, while American audiences who patronize African-American history museums will likely be more familiar with the civil rights struggles (some having participated in it themselves), it is probably fair to assume that British and international audiences will be less acquainted with the American historical narrative. Therefore, by introducing them first to the figures they are already familiar with and then, through the video, to the lesser-known grassroots activists who were central to the movement, the ISM can better engage and educate its non-American audience. This serves as a reminder that each institution should be considered within its own context and that comparative analyses should be approached cautiously.

The BCRI strikes a better balance between activists and King—though the narrative is largely focused on foot soldiers, King is not entirely absent and the familiarity of King's strength, grace, and resilience is represented throughout the museum journey. He appears in relevant displays, like those exploring the bus boycott, his imprisonment in Birmingham City Jail, and the March on Washington; however, King rarely dominates a display.[78] By minimizing King's appearance in the museum journey without undervaluing his overall contributions to the movement, the BCRI has effectively redistributed the credit of the era's victories to the rightful recipients.

[78] An understanding exception to this observation is the Birmingham City Jail display. The BCRI has recreated his jail cell using the original cell door, and next to it is a placard with excerpts from the resulting 'A Letter from a Birmingham Jail' that 'brought tears to [the] eyes' of one visitor. *TripAdvisor* (16 April 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r266067839-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 2 July 2016].

Dr. King's jail cell replica (with original door), BCRI

While ISM visitors do not mention foot soldiers or King in their reviews, it is interesting to note that visitors to both the DuSable and the BCRI were surprised at what they considered to be a lack of King displays. Despite the fact that the DuSable arguably over-relied on King and the BCRI presented a more balanced narrative, there are echoes of the same sentiment in both sets of feedback. A DuSable visitor notes: 'I was…surprised to not see a lot about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. or even very much about any other civil rights leaders.'[79] Similarly, a BCRI visitor writes that there was '[n]ot much on MLK, to my surprise'.[80] These comments demonstrate the dominance of King in the collective memory of the era and highlight the disparity between popular demands on museums and the erudite and insular nature of academia. Whether museums engage heavily with King or balance his representation with those of ordinary people, visitors are likely to expect more engagement than is presented.

[79] *TripAdvisor* (9 April 2012) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g35805-d144244-r127539943-DuSable_Museum_of_African_American_History-Chicago_Illinois.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 20 August 2016].
[80] *TripAdvisor* (12 February 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r253836976-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 2 July 2016].

Unlike the DuSable (in which King dominates the civil rights narrative), the ISM (in which neither King nor foot soldiers get a significant amount of attention), and the BCRI (in which King is present throughout the gallery, but plays a secondary role to activists and organizations), the NMAACH engages with King indirectly and infrequently. His name appears in displays examining organizations, his face looks out at visitors from various images, and his words travel from screen to heart in a few audio displays; in this way, he is present. But he also feels very absent from the civil rights narrative. In *Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom*, King only receives one standalone display comprised of a short annotation on the evolution of his ideas, images underpinning his shift from southern discrimination to economic inequality, and two artifacts—a bucket in which he soaked his feet after the Selma to Montgomery marches and a Congressional gold medal that was posthumously awarded to Coretta Scott King in 2014.[81]

The absence of King in the NMAAHC may be the result of a conscious effort to shine the spotlight on ordinary people; however, there may also be a more practical explanation. A 2016 *Washington Post* article explains that the surviving King children have made it difficult for museums to acquire King's artifacts by charging steep fees and filing lawsuits when they do not feel that they are being fairly compensated. This obstruction has been challenging for historians, media outlets, museums, and others trying to commemorate King. Those familiar with this pattern of behavior were unsurprised when no deal was struck between the King family and the NMAAHC. King biographer David Garrow said: 'I could not be more cynical, more jaded on this subject. Given the family's behavior this last 20 years, they're unlikely to have any interest in sharing without a large

[81] Though the correlating placard states that the medal was posthumously awarded to Coretta Scott King, it was jointly awarded to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as well. For more on these awards, see for example: Wesley Lowery, 'Congressional Gold Medal awarded to the Rev. Martin Luther and Coretta Scott King', *The Washington Post* (24 June 2014) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2014/06/24/congressional-gold-medal-awarded-to-the-rev-martin-luther-and-coretta-scott-king/?utm_term=.274624895107> [accessed on 16 November 2018].

upfront payment.'[82] Similarly, Clayborne Carson has said: 'They've made clear that they're not going to just give away his legacy, so I just think realistically you have to move on.'[83] Thus, while there has been contact between the NMAAHC collections team and the Kings, museum director Lonnie Bunch, nor others familiar with the situation, seem hopeful that they will be able to reach an agreement.[84]

Certainly, it seems a shame that curatorial creation should be dictated by these types of personal disputes. As King's former attorney Clarence Jones has said:

> *It's outrageous…This is the Smithsonian. This is not just another party. This is one of the most important institutions now in the 21st century. And this is probably the greatest civil rights leader in the 20th century. I find it shameful and I'm sad.*[85]

In this way, the comparative absence of King in the NMAAHC seems different than the intentional activist-focused narrative in the BCRI. However, the publicization of these difficulties exposes the challenges that curators often experience behind the scenes. Though presumably the best displays come from a full range of curatorial freedom, the lack of access to King has resulted in a NMAAHC civil rights narrative that spotlights ordinary people and under-credited local leaders. For this reason, despite the underlying disputes and the curatorial restraints, the museum has also been freed from a King-centric narrative and has been able to redirect and reshape collective memory toward the inclusion of forgotten civil rights heroes.

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[82] Geoff Edgers, 'Why no major Martin Luther King Jr. artifacts will be at the new African American museum', *Washington Post* (11 September 2016) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/why-no-major-martin-luther-king-artifacts-will-be-at-the-new-african-american-museum/2016/09/11/be05624e-75d3-11e6-be4f-3f42f2e5a49e_story.html?utm_term=.991bc4b52955 > [accessed on 4 June 2018].

[83] Ibid.

[84] Many things stand in the way of this agreement. Many of the most significant items were—as of September 2016—still under legal dispute, as some of the Kings had sued others for ownership rights. Moreover, the Kings seem to prefer loaning items, while Bunch is seeking permanent artifacts that do not need to be returned. Moreover, even if all of this was worked out in negotiations, curators seem confident that the items will be too expensive for the museum to afford.

[85] Edgers, 'Why no major Martin Luther King Jr artifacts will be at the new African American museum', *Washington Post*.

In these museums' civil rights representations, perhaps the most significant omission from these displays on King, organizations, and grassroots activism is discussion about class. While there are some displays that would lend themselves well to this topic—particularly the BCRI's window and door display, which already succeeds in challenging misconceptions about homogenous black attitudes toward civil rights—there were no explicit references to it in any of these institutions. Because class was so central to the movement's organizations, activists, and attitudes, it is surprising that it gets virtually no museological attention in these displays.[86] Greater engagement with this theme would convey the period more authentically and would encourage visitors to understand the nuanced dynamics between race, class, and power that shaped attitudes towards civil rights, as well as educating visitors about the historical roots of the modern economic disparity between poor and middle class African Americans.[87]

LOCALIZATION, NATIONALIZATION, AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

The public history of the civil rights era often focuses on one national Civil Rights Movement—a perspective that conflicts with the reality of the hundreds of local grassroots

[86] For more on the role of class in the civil rights era, see for example: Joseph W. Scott, 'Social Class Factors Underlying the Civil Rights Movement', *Phylon* 27.2 (1966), 132-144; Jack Bloom, *Class, Race and the Civil Rights Movement* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Aaron Schutz, *Social Class, Social Action, and Education: The Failure of Progressive Democracy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 189-217; Max Krochmal, 'An Unmistakably Working-Class Vision: Birmingham's Foot Soldiers and Their Civil Rights Movement', *The Journal of Southern History* 76.4 (2010), 922-960; Harold A. McDougall, 'Class Contradictions in the Civil Rights Movement: The Politics of Respectability, Disrespect, and Self-Respect', *Howard Human & Civil Rights Law Review* 45 (2017), 45-85.

[87] Ira Berlin credits the Civil Rights Act of 1965 for enlarging the black middle class. He writes: 'The great success of the Civil Rights Act of 1965—the substantial enlargement of the black middle class—has allowed some black men and women to enter more fully into American economic life and enjoy its benefits. The appearance of business leaders such as Kenneth I. Chenault of American Express, Robert Johnson of Black Entertainment Television (BET), and Richard Parsons of America Online (AOL) and of political figures such as Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell can be regarded as evidence of the massive expansion of the black professional and managerial class. However fragile this new class, its members stand apart from those left behind in the "hood," whose children have a greater chance of going to jail than going to college.' Because there is such a direct connection between the creation of the black middle class in the mid-20th century and modern expectations, experiences, and circumstances of African Americans, museological exploration of this history would be particularly relevant to current generations of visitors. See: Berlin, 'American Slavery in History and Memory', p. 1258.

civil rights movements explored in historiography since the 1980s.[88] As historian Adam Fairclough notes, this geographic approach has not only provided local perspectives to counter the mainstream national narrative, but has also overcome the tendency within civil rights historiography to focus on either black or white as monolithic groups rather than exploring their complexities and engagements with one another.[89] Despite the positive outcomes from these local studies, Fairclough warns of 'local people-itis', arguing: 'Emphasis on the purely local can lead to insularity and incoherence. Local struggles had a state, regional and national context, and these intersected in complex ways.'[90] Similarly, historian Steven F. Lawson writes that while independent, local movements were key to the struggle's successes, they heavily relied on the federal government and national organizations and that necessity should not be under-acknowledged.[91] Though these warnings should be kept in mind, local analyses are central to a comprehensive understanding of the civil rights era and its regional varieties, strategies, and complexities.

While local studies have found their place in civil rights historiography, the era still exists as one national movement in collective memory. As is often the case when public memory and academic history clash, it is interesting to consider how museums resolve this

[88] Because of the application of this 'bottom up' approach to civil rights scholarship, cities like Greensboro, Tuskegee, Birmingham, and Little Rock, as well as states such as Georgia and Mississippi, have received extensive attention by historians, while a host of other cities have been included in local studies. See for example: William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Robert J. Norrell, *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Civil Rights Movement in Tuskegee* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1985); Kim Lacy Rogers, *Righteous Lives: Narratives of the New Orleans Civil Rights Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 1993); John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995); Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995); Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Glenn T. Eskew, *But For Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Glenda Alice Rabby, *The Pain and the Promise: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Tallahassee, Florida* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999); Stephen G. N. Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta: The Struggle for Racial Equality in Georgia, 1940-1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001); John A. Kirk, *Redefining the Color Line: Black Activism in Little Rock, Arkansas, 1940-1970* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002); J. Mills Thornton III, *Dividing Lines: Municipal Politics and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Montgomery, Birmingham, and Selma* (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 2002).
[89] Fairclough, 'State of the Art', p. 393.
[90] Ibid, p. 394.
[91] Steven F. Lawson, 'Commentary'. In Charles W. Eagles (ed.), *The Civil Rights Movement in America* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1986), 32-37.

conflict. Museums have a significant opportunity to diverge from the traditional timeline of national events and teach visitors about local efforts in the surrounding region. Examining whether museums engage with methods of localization, nationalization, or internationalization reveals the cornerstone of each museological narrative.[92]

Localization is an approach utilized in the DuSable's civil rights representation, but it is used most extensively in the BCRI. References to Chicago and Illinois or Birmingham and Alabama, respectively, tie the civil rights narrative to the surrounding area—a method that helps residents and tourists alike learn more about the city. In the DuSable's brief engagement with civil rights, displays tend to focus far more on local activities in the later years than on earlier southern events. In addition to images from local events—such as the Illinois Rally for Civil Rights at Soldier Field and the Chicago Freedom Movement—the most localized aspect of the narrative is an homage to Emmett Till, including a street sign for 'EMMET TILL RD', a portion of Chicago's 71st Street that was named for the slain boy.[93] The BCRI's localization is far more extensive, with much of the *Movement* narrative focusing on Birmingham and Alabama. With a significant (though not exclusive) focus on 1963, the BCRI examines local and state-wide events like the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing, the Children's Crusade, the Birmingham Campaign, and King's arrest in Birmingham City Jail. In these displays, curators use primary sources (most notably, newspapers like *Birmingham Post-Herald*, *Montgomery Advertiser*, and *The Birmingham News*) and artifacts (for example, King's jail cell door and a 5,000-pound portion of Eugene 'Bull' Connor's water cannon tank) to connect civil rights history to the surrounding city.

[92] Because the International Slavery Museum is not located in the United States, I have not discussed whether or not it has a local or national focus. In its general museum narrative, the ISM does a great job highlighting local history during this period, but because I am only researching its representation of American history, this Liverpool narrative will not be analyzed in depth here.

[93] Though Emmett Till was murdered in Mississippi, he lived in Chicago and it was the site of his infamous open-casket funeral.

Alabama newspapers, BCRI

Eugene 'Bull' Connor's tank, BCRI

While the BCRI maintains a focus on local and state-wide civil rights history, major civil rights milestones in other regions of the nation are also incorporated, providing a sense of familiarity to visitors.[94] Visitors seem to appreciate this balance as they are able to learn about local, lesser-known events within the more well-known framework of the national civil rights timeline. One visitor, for example, writes that this 'excellent civil rights museum…tells the stories of Birmingham, but…sets them against the backdrop of national events.'[95] In contrast, while local activity is highlighted in the DuSable's narrative, many significant national civil rights events are noticeably absent. Though the Montgomery bus boycott is mentioned once, it is not explored in its own display; similarly, *Brown*, the Birmingham campaign, the March on Washington, and the Selma to Montgomery marches do not have displays of their own.[96] In fact, with the exception of

[94] This is done in many ways, but one particularly effective balancing method is an ongoing timeline that appears on several walls throughout *Movement*. First, this timeline is broken down year by year, then month by month during the 'crucial years' of the movement. In all of these timelines, the years (or months) appear in the middle, with national events placed on top of them and Alabamian events placed underneath. In this way, visitors are able to consider parallel events that took place in Birmingham, Alabama, and the nation more broadly during this period.

[95] *TripAdvisor* (26 June 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r386255313-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 30 July 2016].

[96] There is a video entitled 'Civil Rights Movement' that touches on some of these events, but they are largely absent from the displays and the overall exhibit narrative.

Emmett Till's murder, the only event from the traditional national timeline that the museum engages with through displays is the sit-in movement. While a local emphasis can educate visitors about local events, organizations, and individuals, a broader disengagement from national events can render the displayed narrative unrecognizable and decontextualized.[97]

At the BCRI, the local perspective seems to be particularly effective due to the institute's positioning within the city. Sitting across the street from the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church and Kelly Ingram Park, many visitors demonstrate an awareness of the powerful location of the BCRI in their feedback: 'Being across the street from the [Sixteenth Street Baptist Church] and the park where the protesters were hosed and attacked by dogs at the behest of the police is powerful. There are still powerful reminders outside of the museum showing racism is still alive and well.'; '[I]t hit me like a punch in the gut that you can look out the window and see the church today—right there, across the street.'[98] Because the BCRI is located in such a historically significant place, it is no surprise that the museum narrative is largely localized. As such, the BCRI exemplifies a powerful engagement with Birmingham's history in a way that empowers locals and helps outsiders understand the city's central role in civil rights history.

The power of location and the method of localization are frequently mentioned in BCRI visitor feedback. As one visitor summarizes: 'If you are looking for the real

[97] Despite this contrast, it is worth noting that at many points in the Short Movement timeline, events in Birmingham (the Children's Crusade; King's arrest in Birmingham City Jail; the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing) and Alabama more generally (the Montgomery bus boycott; the Selma to Montgomery marches) collide with the national narrative. In these cases, it is difficult to discern whether the BCRI is positioning its narrative within a local or national framework; however, either way there is a significant emphasis on Alabama-specific civil rights struggles, and a similar opportunity certainly exists for the DuSable's civil rights displays.

[98] *TripAdvisor* (19 June 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r384135489-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 30 July 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (20 February 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r255508655-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 30 July 2016].

Birmingham story this is where you should start.'[99] Several reviewers point out that the local focus is especially effective for Birmingham natives, some of whom do not realize the severity of segregation or civil rights struggles that took place in their own city. One visitor writes that while the BCRI is great for everyone, it is a 'must see' for 'all citizens of this area.'[100] This sentiment is echoed in further feedback: 'As a baby boomer, I grew up during the 1960's but was too young to understand all that was occurring. Indeed, I lived in the Birmingham area in the early sixties but was sheltered from the news and the atrocities that were occurring'; 'I visited for the first time this summer and though I've lived in Birmingham my entire life I learned so much about some of the local leaders in the civil rights movement.'[101]

Due to these successes at the BCRI, some of the missed opportunities to connect displays to local civil rights history at the DuSable is surprising. In a particularly puzzling omission, an image on the wall shows a scene from the Chicago Freedom Movement, but there is no accompanying annotation to inform visitors about the significance of this movement or the Fair Housing Act of 1968. This specific omission has been flagged up in the museum's reviews by at least one visitor: 'I was utterly disappointed to see…fantastic photographs of the Rev. Martin Luther King speaking in Chicago and of the protests, but absolutely no context as to what was happening.'[102] Similarly, though CORE is mentioned in a placard, this reference fails to educate visitors about the organization's Chicago roots.

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[99] *TripAdvisor* (30 January 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r251838785-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 2 July 2016].

[100] *TripAdvisor* (21 February 2017] <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r461873284-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 4 August 2017].

[101] *TripAdvisor* (10 October 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r426722667-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 5 December 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (3 September 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r306725093-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 16 June 2016].

[102] *TripAdvisor* (16 August 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g35805-d144244-r299840810-DuSable_Museum_of_African_American_History-Chicago_Illinois.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 2 July 2016].

These and other missed opportunities signal a disconnect between the DuSable's civil rights narrative and the museum's city—a dynamic that would vastly improve this portion of the museum journey.

Those questioning whether museums position their narratives within a framework of localization or nationalization must also question the relationship between each museum's chosen approach and its projected narrative. In some cases, the choice to localize or nationalize a narrative dictates what stories and timeframes are explored. In the BCRI, for example, a local focus throughout the institute results in a strong emphasis on the earlier years of the classical period—years in which major events took place in Birmingham and other cities in Alabama. These events—such as the Birmingham campaign and the Selma to Montgomery marches—are familiar to visitors because they overlap with the popular national timeline. However, this local focus also contributes to the narrative's abrupt ending in 1965 and its disengagement from King's later campaigns that occurred elsewhere in the country. Because of this, the King narrative is cut short—a move that historians like Harding may argue reinforces the 'amnesiac' view of King that persists in the collective memory of civil rights.[103]

In this way, the DuSable's exhibit—though brief and modest—is refreshing. Perhaps this is because, in the same way that the BCRI's local timeline requires a focus on 1954-65, the DuSable's local focus requires an emphasis on the movement's underexplored later years. However, though the DuSable's acknowledgment of King's final campaigns challenges the traditional cropping of King's timeline, message, and significance, this is either unintentional (due to the fact that a local focus requires an emphasis on these northern, poverty-focused years) or it is unstated. If the latter is the case, the DuSable should embrace its perspective and actively educate visitors about common misconceptions concerning the civil rights timeline, its limitations in both time and space,

[103] Harding, 'Beyond Amnesia', pp. 468-476.

and how our understanding of the era is benefited by extending the scope beyond 1965 and the South.

While the BCRI couples a local and national perspective and the DuSable engages with local events, the NMAAHC is the only museum in this study that maintains a national focus by representing the mainstream civil rights narrative. Important and famous events are examined (*Brown v. Board of Education*, the murder of Emmett Till, the bus boycott, the Birmingham campaign, and other well-known markers of the civil rights era), but curators also include local histories from around the nation. One could argue, however, that the narrative should incorporate local civil rights history.[104] Although a display in *Slavery and Freedom* briefly educates visitors about race in the nation's capital (the display focuses on the involvement of enslaved African Americans in the building of the city) and a display in *A Changing America* outlines the Poor People's Campaign and Resurrection City, the civil rights narrative does not connect to the capital city. Whether or not visitors find this balance satisfying will depend on their ideas about the purpose of a national museum—a consideration that has been discussed previously in this thesis.[105]

In addition to the methods of localization and nationalization, some museums internationalize their messages—a particularly popular approach in the representation of civil rights history. By placing the American civil rights era into a global framework of human rights violations and advocacy, museums can draw attention to contemporary and

[104] The lack of engagement with local history—particularly more recent eras like Jim Crow and civil rights—would also highlight divisions in the nation's capital, which could cause controversy. Thus, while the focus on more distant histories may represent a conscious decision about what national history museums should and should not display, it may also help avoid local contentiousness.

[105] In past interviews, Lonnie Bunch has expressed a commitment to telling local stories, but he explains that the ways the museum functions as a local institution is more evident in its public programs. He says: '…And so for me, part of what we wanted to do was yes, we're international and national, [but] we wanted to take care of home. So what that means to me is that we will tell Washington stories that get integrated throughout the museum, that we will do…public programs that will be for mainly the District, Maryland and Virginia communities. We will craft educational programs where we'll use the D.C. schools and Maryland schools and Virginia schools as the heart of these programs. So we'll take care of the nation, but I want to make sure that we also reap the benefit of this amazing community that's Washington, D.C.' See: Ally Schweitzer, 'Lonnie Bunch On Telling "The American Story Through An African American Lens"', *WAMU* (16 August 2016) <https://wamu.org/story/16/08/16/interview_lonnie_bunch_african_american_museum/> [accessed on 20 October 2018].

modern injustices in the United States and abroad. Furthermore, this connection sometimes highlights the trailblazing work done by civil rights activists who not only inspired their nation, but also ignited activists around the world in the fight for equality. An international framing of the era certainly makes sense—during the 1960s and 1970s many individuals and organizations positioned the movement in the same way. Organizations like the NAACP, SCLC, SNCC, and later the Black Panthers, all framed the black freedom struggle within an international context, connecting the plight of African Americans to that of Africans, Latin Americans, and Asians.[106]

King himself saw a strong connection between American segregation and colonial oppression in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. During the Montgomery bus boycott King began to internationalize his purpose and discourse, considering the fight in America as 'a part of [an] overall movement in the world in which oppressed people are revolting against…imperialism and colonialism.'[107] Because this comparative framework has its roots in the 1950s and 1960s, it seems not only appropriate but responsible for curators to similarly position the civil rights era in an international context. Some museums, like the ISM and the BCRI, make the connection between American civil rights and global human rights, and this relationship is taken even further at museums that are not explored in this thesis, such as Atlanta's Museum of Civil and Human Rights or Greensboro's International Civil Rights Center and Museum, whose general museological narratives revolve around the exploration this interconnected relationship.

In the BCRI, the broad civil rights narratives remain local and national throughout *Movement*; however, in the *Human Rights Gallery* an international scope encourages visitors to compare civil rights struggles in the United States to abuses of human rights

[106] Steven F. Lawson, 'Freedom Then, Freedom Now: The Historiography of the Civil Rights Movement', *The American Historical Review* 96.2 (1991), 456-471 (p. 463).
[107] James H. Cone, 'Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Third World', *Journal of American History* 74 (1987), 455-467 (p. 456).

worldwide. The gallery includes information about Darfur, Tiananmen Square, the Solidarity Movement in Gdansk, Poland, and the oil company protests in Nigeria. These examples of global human rights struggles are linked to American civil rights activism throughout the gallery, though these connections could be indicated more clearly.[108] Similarly, the ISM's *Legacy* presents the civil rights narrative in an international context that broadly examines themes of race and place. In this gallery, visitors learn about civil rights and liberation struggles around the world, various manifestations of 20th century racism, influential black figures worldwide, modern human rights struggles, and the dynamic between poverty, race, and geography.

Both the *Human Rights Gallery* and *Legacy* signal a curatorial decision to end the museum journey with an emphasis on global struggle and, presumably, the connections between black history and global human rights violations. Depending on the nature of the specific museum, visitors may either feel that this is a fitting conclusion to the museum experience or that it diverts attention from modern contentious issues nearer to home. While ISM visitors do not express these concerns in their feedback, several BCRI visitors discuss *Human Rights Gallery* with mixed feelings. Some reviewers were clearly satisfied with the gallery's international focus: 'I really appreciated this tie-in to the ongoing work of social justice and human rights'; 'I especially appreciated the exhibit at the end that puts civil rights in the U.S. in broader perspective with human rights around the world. Wish they could expand that.'[109] However, another visitor said of the same display: '[The museum] ends on a message of addressing all kinds of major human rights issues around

[108] There are several links between American civil rights and global human rights in this gallery: a comic book-style display on the Tiananmen Square protests includes a word bubble from the crowd saying 'WE SHALL OVERCO-O-OME!'; a mural depicts prominent black figures (Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Langston Hughes, Duke Ellington, and Billie Holiday) alongside Anne Frank and an inscription reading 'CIVIL RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS'; a 5,000 ton portion of 'Bull' Connor's tank juxtaposes the Tiananmen Square display.
[109] *TripAdvisor* (20 February 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r255508655-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 30 July 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (14 September 2014) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r228865414-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 2 July 2016].

the world (there were around 10, but I remember only Darfur if that tells you anything!). Instead, I really wished the exhibit had stayed on point with racial issues and activism in the U.S.'[110]

Museum narratives that are too exclusively internationalized may attract criticism that the displays divert attention away from controversial issues nearby and toward the foreign and distant.[111] As Owen Dwyer argues: '[T]he connections drawn to the worldwide struggle for human rights shifts attention away from the contemporary and local toward the spectacular and global.'[112] This is a fair argument, but each institution should be judged against its own purpose and scope. At the BCRI, an American-focus dominates the first two galleries, which may make the final shift toward global events a surprise for visitors. While the gallery does not entirely overlook modern racial issues—a screen plays footage of current protests—modern race relations could be better explored. Though the BCRI's internationalization approach makes a powerful point that easily fits into the civil rights narrative, it may be even more effective if these displays were presented alongside further information about modern racial issues in America. As it is, the gallery seems to divert attention from modern American race relations and reinforce the myth of the 'Won Cause' by suggesting that these issues are no longer concerns within the United States. It may be fair to argue, however, that an international approach seems more appropriate for a self-described international museum like the ISM. Unlike the BCRI, all three of the ISM's

[110] *TripAdvisor* (5 January 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r337639435-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 20 June 2016].

[111] In her analysis of the BCRI, Victoria J. Gallagher notes the shift away from the local in the *Human Rights Gallery*: 'The final gallery devoted to ongoing international civil rights struggles suggests that there is still more to be done (but not necessarily in the new, "All American City" of Birmingham?), yet visitors experience a journey with a clear beginning and end, and few choices to be made along the way.' See: Gallagher, 'Memory and Reconciliation in the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute', p. 313.

[112] Dwyer also writes: '[A]t many of the largest civil rights museums, treatment of *contemporary* racism and racial politics is conspicuously absent….In fact, most of the memorials and museums fail to make convincing connections to the present condition of racism in the United States.' He continues by explaining that sometimes this omission is related to funding sources, a determining factor in remaining non-controversial: 'This situation renders civil rights memorials vulnerable to becoming mere repositories of a history that, while powerfully decrying the racism of the past, does not always make clear its connections to a local present.' Dwyer, 'Interpreting the Civil Rights Movement', pp. 16-18.

galleries are characterized by the theme of global connection, so internationalization in *Legacy* does not seem out of place when considered alongside *Life in West Africa* and *Enslavement and the Middle Passage*.

A sitting area where visitors can watch a film on global inequalities, ISM

One of the many displays highlighting modern global issues, ISM

Moreover, international does not necessarily equate to modern—an important distinction between *Human Rights Gallery* and *Legacy*. The events covered in the *Human Rights Gallery* all took place in the 20th century, with several decades separating visitors from even the most recent of these struggles. On the other hand, the focus in *Legacy* is largely modern, including relevant figures, debates, and topics in its displays. For this reason, it feels as though the *Human Rights Gallery* fails to make a connection between the past and present, while *Legacy* concludes a cohesive museological journey from 16th century West Africa to our more recognizable 21st century world. In this way, ISM curators decide against ending the museum narrative on a more comfortable and optimistic event like the Voting Rights Act or, in more recent history, the 2008 election of President Obama. Instead, they conclude the museum journey by discussing modern race relations

and economic conditions around the world, reminding visitors that there is plenty of work to be done in the ongoing battle for civil and human rights.

It is worth noting, however, that curators at the BCRI—or other museums that do not significantly address modern racial issues—may have several reasons for this decision. Particularly in the current political climate, which is plagued with hyper-partisanship and tense divisions, modern racial issues are steeped in politics. Topics like NFL National Anthem protests, Black Lives Matter, Confederate monuments, and President Trump's turbulent relationship with race could potentially aggravate visitors. Moreover, any controversy caused in debates may jeopardize resources. Whether this comes in the form of lower visitor numbers or funding cuts, museums are reliant on these revenue streams and must consider them when creating displays. Finally, curators may consider these types of topics to be developing stories. Though historical narratives are never entirely settled, it is easier to represent distant pasts than it is to engage with events that are still playing out in the public arena. Curators likely consider this when deciding whether to invest in expensive displays that may be quickly dated by a new development. With these understandable considerations in mind, the inclusion of some modern debates would not only feel like a more cohesive end to a museological experience, but would also avoid the tendency to end the narrative with an inauthentically idealized and reassuring depiction of modern life.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSION

In 1983 the Black Women's Coalition of Atlanta hosted an award ceremony to honor African-American women who contributed to the city's struggle for civil rights. Acknowledging the omission of these women from the historical memory of the civil rights era, the program recognized the group…

> *[W]hich has been overlooked and under acknowledged in the chronicling of our city's history. While much has been written and recorded about the men of that era, little (if any) recognition has been afforded those Black women who worked shoulder to shoulder with the "*Negro Leaders*" of the late forties, fifties, and the early sixties…*[113]

Women played a crucial role in civil rights organization and activism, and their skills, leadership, and bravery were central to the era's most monumental victories. Stories of courage and resilience by women abound; for example, when a group of black men were arrested in Montgomery, several older women arrived at the courthouse 'wearing men's hats and dresses rolled up' and told a policeman: '[We] don't care what you got. If you hit one of us, you'll not leave here alive.'[114] Sadly, narratives like these—which have the potential to inspire a new generation of young women today—are largely omitted from public memory.

Academics began addressing the female omission from civil rights scholarship in the 1980s, and since this time biographical works have been produced examining significant women like Septima Clark, Ella Baker, and Fannie Lou Hamer, while other studies have examined the role of women more broadly through various lenses.[115] While this important research has helped to highlight the important role of women in the black freedom struggle, this academic trend has not yet translated into the collective memory of the civil rights era, from which women remain largely absent. As Dwyer writes, women

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[113] Kathryn L. Nasstrom, 'Down to Now: Memory, Narrative, and Women's Leadership in the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta, Georgia', *Gender & History* 11.1 (1999), 113-144 (p. 113).
[114] Lawson, 'Freedom Then, Freedom Now', p. 468.
[115] For more on women in the civil rights era, see for example: Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Random House, 1980); Cynthia Stokes Brown (ed.), *Ready from Within: Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement* (Navarro: Wild Trees Press, 1986); Kay Mills, *This Little Light of Mine: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* (New York: Plume, 1994); Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long? African American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Joanne Grant, *Ella Baker: Freedom Bound* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1998); Peter J. Ling and Sharon Monteith (eds), *Gender in the Civil Rights Movement* (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1999); Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline A. Rouse, and Barbara Woods (ed.), *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Douglas Brinkley, *Rosa Parks* (New York: Viking, 2000); Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin (eds), *Sisters in the Struggle: African-American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (New York: NYU Press, 2001).

have also been largely omitted from museological representation, and when they are present they are often framed in ways that do not convey their true impact.[116] With these concepts in mind, it is interesting to analyze the representation of women in the BCRI, DuSable, NMAAHC, and ISM, questioning whether these institutions challenge or reinforce the idea that women played little or no role in activism, organization, or leadership during the civil rights era.

The BCRI and NMAAHC effectively counter the Great Man paradigm by highlighting the role of women in the fight for civil rights. In the BCRI, the inclusion is sometimes subtle—for example, the inclusion of women in civil rights photographs—but some displays explicitly address this issue. *Movement* incorporates information about famous figures like Rosa Parks, as well as lesser-known women such as Virginia Durr, Aurelia Browder, Johnnie Carr, Claudette Colvin, Susie McDonald, Jo Ann Robinson, and Mary Louise Smith.[117] Similarly, civil rights displays in the NMAAHC introduce visitors to Parks, Colvin, Robinson, Dorothy Geraldine Counts, Ruby Bridges, Ella Baker, Daisy Bates, and Frances Albrier.[118] Along the ramp between *Defending Freedom*, *Defining*

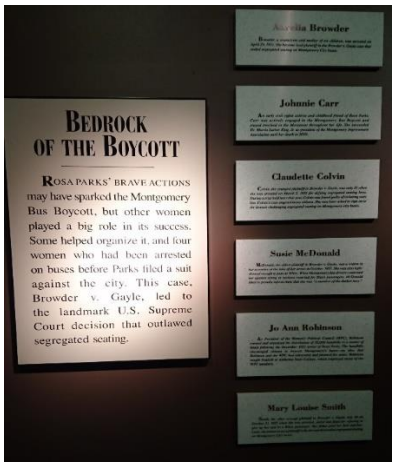
[116] Dwyer, 'Interpreting the Civil Rights Movement', pp. 11-13.

[117] For more on Colvin and Robinson, see footnotes 73 and 74 in this chapter respectively. Virginia Durr (b. 1903; d. 1999) was a lifelong civil rights activist and lobbyist in Alabama who used (and risked) her privilege and connections (Durr was a white woman raised in a wealthy family, was married to prominent lawyer Clifford Durr, was friends with Eleanor Roosevelt, and was the sister-in-law of Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black) to advance the fight for racial equality. Aurelia Browder (b. 1919; d. 1971) was a civil rights activist who refused to give up her bus seat a month after Colvin's arrest, and she was the eponymous plaintiff of *Browder v. Gayle*—a lawsuit filed by Fred Gray and Robert L. Carter on behalf of Browder and four other women who had experienced discrimination on Alabama buses. Johnnie Carr (b. 1911; d. 2008) was a Montgomery civil rights leader who succeeded King as President of the Montgomery Improvement Association in 1967. Susie McDonald (birth and death unknown) was one of the plaintiffs in *Browder v. Gayle*—an older woman by the time of the lawsuit, McDonald had long used her financial means to help the local black community. Mary Louise Smith (b. 1937) is a civil rights activist who was a plaintiff in *Browder v. Gayle* and later participated in voting rights campaigns and the March on Washington. For more information about these women, see for example: Virginia Foster Durr, *Outside the Magic Circle: The Autobiography of Virginia Foster Durr* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1990); Randall Williams and Johnnie Carr, *Johnnie: The Life of Johnnie Rebecca Carr* (Montgomery: Black Belt Press, 1996); Paul Hendrickson, 'The Ladies Before Rosa', *The Washington Post* (12 April 1998) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1998/04/12/the-ladies-before-rosa/469bf82c-16c0-45c5-9991-812ac6a6005f/?utm_term=.b6a60554c303> [accessed on 17 March 2018]. See footnote 115 in this chapter for further reading about women in the civil rights era more generally.

[118] For more on Colvin and Robinson, see footnotes 73 and 74 in this chapter respectively. At 15 years old, Dorothy Geraldine Counts (b. 1942) was one of the first African-American students who attended Harry Harding High School in Charlotte, North Carolina following the *Brown* decision. Ruby Bridges (b. 1954) was

Freedom and *A Changing America* a non-gallery space focuses on the role of women in the movement. A video highlighting the ways that women contributed to civil rights plays on a loop, complemented by a nearby placard highlighting women in the movement.

Rosa Parks statue, BCRI



Women in the civil rights era display, BCRI

While the inclusion of famous women—most notably Rosa Parks—is a significant factor in civil rights displays, it is perhaps also important that curators incorporate lesser-known female figures. Though the distributing of these women into 'famous' and 'non-famous' categories is subjective (presumably based on individual visitors' prior knowledge of the topic), it is fair to assume that visitors may be unaware of figures like Ella Baker or Daisy Bates. Thus, curators have an opportunity to address two issues that can sometimes afflict museum displays. First, they can address the glaring omission of women in these displays, countering the misconception that the civil rights era was organized and led entirely by men. Furthermore, with the inclusion of less-famous women, curators have the

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the first African-American student to attend William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1960, and she was the subject of Norman Rockwell's famous 1964 painting entitled *The Problem We All Live With*. Ella Baker (b. 1903; d. 1986) was a civil rights activist and organizer who played a significant role in organizations like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the NAACP, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Daisy Bates (b. 1914; d. 1999) was a publisher, journalist, and civil rights activist who is best known for her role in the integration of Little Rock's schools. Frances Albrier (b. 1898; d. 1987) was a civil rights activist who worked toward advancing civil rights in her community (most notably in Berkeley where she attended the University of California). For more on Baker, see for example: Grant, *Ella Baker.* For more on Bates, see for example: Daisy Bates, *The Long Shadow of Little Rock: A Memoir* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1986); Margolick, *Elizabeth and Hazel*. See footnote 115 in this chapter for further reading about women in the civil rights era more generally.

opportunity to prioritize the ordinary over the famous in a way that parallels a shift of attention away from King toward lesser-known organizers, leaders, and activists of the period.

Whether or not women included in these displays are famous, the high visibility of women in the civil rights struggles challenges the Great Man paradigm. Instead of regurgitating the dated image of black men making strides on civil rights on their own, inclusive narratives present a more balanced and authentic reflection of approaches to leadership, organization, and activism. Balanced narratives that embrace authentic histories are likely to be popular with visitors; in fact, an NMAAHC visitor noted the inclusion of women in the museum: '[S]o many museums ignore the contributions of women; this one seemed more balanced.'[119] Indeed, the engagement with women at both the NMAAHC and the BCRI is a refreshing take on the civil rights era, demonstrating the strong female role in organizing, mobilizing, publicizing, and pushing America toward change.

While women are heavily incorporated into the civil rights narrative at the BCRI and NMAAHC, they are largely absent from civil rights displays at the DuSable and ISM. Throughout the civil rights display area in the DuSable, women are represented three times.[120] The ISM also only explicitly references Rosa Parks and Angela Davis, though women are subtly included in a rolling film on 20th century discrimination and activism. Other than these references, the images focus largely on men and the annotations and text remain gender neutral by focusing on groups and achievements.

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[119] *TripAdvisor*, <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r428949742-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 2 August 2017].

[120] The first is a brief mention of Emmett Till's mother, discussed only in relation to her decision to have an open-casket funeral for her son in 1955. The next reference to women in the civil rights era is a brief remark about Rosa Parks and her role in the bus boycotts. Finally, against the backdrop of a wall-sized, well-known and annotated image of four young men sitting at the lunch counters in a Greensboro Woolworth's appears a much smaller image of black women seeming to participate in another sit-in. The image is unannotated and the only information provided is the photographer's name, the title of the photography collection, and the date taken.

It is worth noting that these two instances should not be considered equal. Overall, the ISM's engagement with civil rights (and, more specifically, individual civil rights leaders) is understandably brief given the slavery-focused nature of the museum, as well as the international scope that contrasts with the American narratives of the other three institutions in this study. Women are visible in other areas in the *Legacy* gallery—most notably, several inspiring women are honored on the 'Black Achievers Wall'.[121] The DuSable, on the other hand, has no such excuse. An American focus and a full timeline should have lent itself well to challenging a historical misunderstanding. The museum's male-heavy focus (in the civil rights displays and otherwise) reinforces the idea that women played little to no role in the organization, activism, and successes of the period. Moreover, the DuSable's many King-centric displays would provide an opportunity to teach visitors about two of his most effective and brilliant advisors—Ella Baker and Septima Clark. Unfortunately, curators have not yet taken advantage of these opportunities, instead leaving visitors with the impression that successes of the civil rights era should be attributed almost entirely to men.

The 'Black Achievers Wall', ISM

[121] This is not to suggest that *Legacy* would not benefit from further information about the role of women during the civil rights era; rather, I am arguing that this omission is more understandable given the ISM's scope of time and place.

'THE WORLD IS WATCHING'

During the civil rights struggle, radio and television were crucial in disseminating information and gaining nationwide support for activists. As Fairclough writes:

> *It was only by targeting and publicizing the most violent white supremacists that the civil rights movement found an effective counter-strategy that compelled federal intervention. It took the violence of Birmingham and Selma to produce effective civil rights laws, and the murder of civil rights workers in Mississippi and Alabama to prompt a crackdown on Klan terrorism.*[122]

This influence is unsurprising when compared with figures from this period. In 1950, only 9% of US households owned a television; this number increased to 87% in 1960 and then again to 95% by 1970.[123] During this same period, radio—already a popular form of entertainment at the beginning of the civil rights era—also reached new heights. In 1950, 91% of US households already owned a radio, but by 1970 this figure rose to 99%.[124] The increased ownership of radios and televisions during this period was crucial to the marketing and advertising of civil rights, offering more Americans insight into civil rights violations occurring in distant corners of the country. Because media played such a central role during the civil rights era, it is interesting to examine whether or not museums engage with this topic in their displays.[125]

Of these four institutions, the BCRI deals with media in the civil rights era most extensively.[126] While the institute does not devote one section to exploring media during

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[122] Fairclough, 'State of the Art', p. 397.
[123] 'Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1982-83', *U.S. Census Bureau* <https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/1978tvsets.pdf> [accessed on 1 October 2017].
[124] 'Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1999', *U.S. Census Bureau* <https://www.census.gov/prod/99pubs/99statab/sec31.pdf> [accessed on 1 October 2017].
[125] These figures can also be considered against the rise in smart phone ownership over the last decade. According to Pew Research, US cell phone ownership jumped from 62% in 2002 to 95% in 2018, and smartphone ownership increased from 35% in 2011 to 77% in 2018. Just as televisions and radios were used as tools in the publicizing of civil rights, people have increasingly used their smart phone cameras to record police interactions with African Americans amid Black Lives Matter. See: 'Mobile Fact Sheet', *Pew Research Center* (5 February 2018) <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/mobile/> [accessed on 6 October 2018].
[126] It should be noted that the NMAAHC has one display that focuses on media. A contemporary television camera sits in a glass case and a nearby annotation explains that civil rights leaders were aware of the influence of televised violence, protests, and speeches. This awareness led to a consciousness in planning

the civil rights struggle, hints of its role are evident throughout the museum journey. Sometimes this inclusion is subtle—for example, visitors may notice the radio in the living room replica or the television in the barbershop replica. At other points in the museum journey, the role of media is more explicit. In *Movement*, for example, a white concrete wall with the word 'Birmingham' painted in black serves as its own display. Under the city's name is a red piece of graffiti that says 'THE WORLD IS WATCHING!' This phrase—referencing the role of television and photography during the civil rights era—is used again on a digital screen displaying Birmingham newspaper articles. The central role of television is also emphasized in a mock display window of a replica television store, in which five televisions play King footage.

Graffiti display, BCRI

Digital newspaper display, BCRI

This approach resonates well with some visitors, causing reflection on their own experiences with televised civil rights footage. As one visitor writes: 'We were all amazed at the black and white T.V. sets, broadcasting the news of the day in the turbulent 1960's. All of us were in high school, where we watched from afar, living 1,000 miles from here.

stages in which organizers and leaders decided not only what would be the most effective way to protest, but also the best way to 'maximize newsworthiness'.

We had no idea about the difficult struggles for equal rights for all in the United States.'[127] Therefore, these displays simultaneously teach young visitors about the role of media in the civil rights era and trigger memories of watching civil rights coverage in older generations.

Despite the fact that the BCRI was the only institution in this study to overtly engage with the theme of media in the civil rights era, media is inherently an underlying aspect in the civil rights displays evaluated in this chapter. The primary mass media vehicles used to publicize racism were photographs, film footage, and audio. It seems obvious to write that photographs make up a large portion of all of these civil rights displays, but visitors (and museum scholars) should remember their dual significance.[128] While photographs in museum displays are tools used to exhibit history and complement the historical narrative being disseminated by each institution, visitors can also reflect on their contemporary significance, which generated an outpouring of support for civil rights activists.

Similarly, museum displays often include footage from important civil rights events, which either shows the severe extent of racism or the bravery of civil rights activists. This is an effective museological method, but the impact of this footage in its own time should not be underestimated. Like the power of photography, footage of segregationists and civil rights struggles played on television sets throughout America, garnering national sympathy for the once-isolated protestors. Finally, visitors will hear familiar sounds of famous speeches, chants, or songs as they walk through the civil rights

[127] *TripAdvisor* (25 July 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r397056295-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 30 August 2016].

[128] While the use of photographs in civil rights displays has several benefits, it is also important to remember that this method—as well as, to some extent, film footage—raises the issue of accuracy and authenticity. Unlike our modern world, in which photos are taken casually, frequently, and by almost everyone, civil rights images were largely captured by professional photographers who were—in many cases—more sympathetic to civil rights protesters than they were to segregationists and law enforcement officers. In this way, then, photographers were more likely to document dramatic confrontations than more mundane and peaceful events.

portion of their museum journey: for example, the NMAAHC and BCRI are filled with audio and video of speeches, rallies, and interviews; the DuSable invites visitors to press a button to listen to political interviews and watch protest footage; a rolling video at the ISM plays footage of American civil rights activism and African liberation movements. Thus, though these museums could certainly deal with the concept of mass media more explicitly, the photographs, footage, and audio in civil rights portions of these institutions inherently pay tribute to these important mediums—all of which advanced the cause of civil rights and equipped organizers and leaders with new means of reaching the masses.

Though these museums—whether explicitly or implicitly—engage to some extent with visual manifestations of the civil rights era, they miss the opportunity to highlight the importance of the radio in this period. As historian Brian Ward writes:

> *[T]he radio was often the most important mass medium operating within southern black communities during the zenith of the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s….It played an important role in laying the foundations for those struggles and was occasionally decisive in determining their outcome...and…it continued to articulate and reflect changing African American identity, consciousness, and protest agendas [during the 1970s and early 1970s].*[129]

Despite its importance, very few—if any—displays in this study reference the role of radio. In addition to teaching visitors about the branding and publicizing of civil rights, engagement with this topic would also provide opportunities for a localized perspective, as museums could highlight the histories of radio stations in their own regions that played a role in the freedom struggle.

[129] Brian Ward, *Radio and the Struggle for Civil Rights in the South* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), p. 2.

REPRESENTING (IN)JUSTICE

The historical relationship between African Americans and social justice has been troubling. In museum displays, this relationship is most often examined through the themes of justice and injustice, which are sometimes explored as separate elements, with displays representing moments of judicial victory or moments of legal oversight. These types of displays give insight into the high and low points of the civil rights period and, as such, can serve as the more emotive points along the museum journey. On the other hand, at times curators examine the intertwined dynamic between justice and injustice. This complicated relationship is at the core of many of the most famous civil rights events and demonstrates the complexity of history. Considering the ways that the BCRI, DuSable, and NMAAHC engage with these themes is insightful, as justice and injustice are two of the primary pillars of the civil rights era and, in turn, civil rights displays.[130]

Justice is often approached through the examination of court cases—an approach used by both the BCRI and NMAAHC. In addition to the BCRI's replica courtroom, a display in *Movement* explains that though *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) gets the most attention, other cases—such as *NAACP v. State of Alabama* (1958), *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* (1960), and *St. John Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* (1961)—'chipped away at unfair practices'.[131] This display, as well as another that highlights *Browder v. Gayle* (1956), not only teaches visitors about civil rights legislation through the lens of the courtroom, but also challenges the tendency to disproportionately assign significance based on familiarity.[132] The NMAAHC also engages with legal victories, but

[130] To be clear, the ISM deals broadly with these themes, but because they are not within the American civil rights framework it is hard to compare them to displays in the DuSable, BCRI, and NMAAHC.
[131] *NAACP v. State of Alabama* (1958) came in front of the U.S. Supreme Court when the state of Alabama tried to revoke the right of the NAACP to conduct business within the state. *Gomillion V. Lightfoot* (1960) came in front of the U.S. Supreme Court when Charles G. Gomillion and others accused the Tuskegee mayor and other city officials of drawing district boundaries that would disenfranchise African Americans. *St. John Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* (1961) was brought before the U.S. federal court after Alabama State College expelled six students for no explicit reason (the students felt that their expulsion was punishment for their participation in civil rights demonstration) *in loco parentis* and without a hearing.
[132] See footnote 117 in this chapter for more information about *Browder v. Gayle* (1956).

unlike the BCRI it focuses on two of the most well-known cases of the era. In *Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom*, visitors will learn about *Brown* (with the interesting inclusion of the original dolls used by Kenneth and Mamie Clark in their psychological tests) and *Loving v. Virginia*.[133] Though the NMAAHC prioritizes famous court cases rather than teaching visitors about lesser-known cases, these displays effectively highlight the major trials and legislation of the era—all of which accompanied victories in courts, state houses, and Congress to advance the nation toward a more equal society.

While the theme of justice brings an uplifting element to civil rights narratives, the representation of injustice serves as a stark reminder of the period's darkest moments. The BCRI and NMAAHC approach this topic through several displays. In both of these museums, visitors learn about unpunished murders and rapes, cases of abused power by people in positions of authority, and methods used to intimidate African Americans. Three specific displays (two in the BCRI; one in the NMAAHC) warrant individual explanation, as each of them provide emotive moments along the museum journey. In the BCRI, a display on the Freedom Rides educates visitors about the violent backlash awaiting Freedom Riders throughout their route. The most haunting part of this exhibit is a life-sized replica of the burned bus positioned in a dark corner of the room. The replica is made even more powerful due to its historical accuracy—the real Freedom Riders' bus was burned by a group of Klansmen near Anniston, Alabama. This exhibit had a significant impact on some visitors: 'The [TV] clips and special photo exhibit of the Freedom Riders' bus bombing and fire brought back strong memories that my family, and the rest of the

[133] Kenneth and Mamie Clark were a married psychologist team best known for their doll tests that contributed to the ending of school segregation. In the test, children were presented with two dolls (one black; one white) and asked a series of questions about which doll they associated with various qualities. The results demonstrated internalized racism from black children, particularly those who attended segregated schools. The study significantly contributed to *Briggs v. Elliot* and the subsequent trial *Brown v. Board of Education*. The Clarks served as expert witnesses in the former and wrote an evidence brief in the latter. *Loving v. Virginia* came before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1967, when African-American woman Mildred Jeter and white man Richard Loving were each sentenced to one year in prison after they wed. The landmark decision overturned all state laws banning interracial marriage, and it was cited as precedent in the 2015 court decision to legalize gay marriage.

world, watch[ed] unfold over 50+ years ago'; 'I think the most arresting sight for me was to see the front part of the burned out Freedom Ride [bus] on display.'[134] This somber, powerful display is an effective way to highlight the height of racial injustice in the mid-20th century.

'Freedom' bus target of Anniston mob

Fired by an incendiary bomb hurled through a rear window, a Greyhound bus carrying seven pro-integration "Freedom Riders" goes up in smoke and flame near Anniston yesterday. The passengers, fearful of a threatening mob outside, remained on the bus until nearly all were overcome by smoke. When this picture was taken the band of vigilante whites had been dispersed by the Highway Patrol.

Contemporary photo of burned bus near Anniston

Burned bus replica, BCRI

Later in the BCRI's *Movement*, visitors face perhaps the most emotional part of the museum—an extensive exhibit on the 1963 Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing. The bombing, which was perpetrated by members of the Ku Klux Klan and took the lives of Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson, and Carol Denise McNair, shook the city and the nation. The raw emotion is evident in the thoughtful display and is made even more powerful by the institute's close proximity to the church itself. In addition to information and images, the BCRI displays a broken stained glass window from the church, a tribute to the four girls, shattered glass from the day, newspaper and magazine

[134] *TripAdvisor* (13 April 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r364051361-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 30 August 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (18 February 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r348888775-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 4 August 2016].

covers, and the shoes, purse, and cross necklace from one of the girls—along with a piece of brick that was found in her skull.

Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing display, BCRI

This display was the most frequently-mentioned exhibit in the museum feedback and has clearly made a lasting impression on many visitors. It seems that it is the girl's personal belongings, rather than the display in its entirety, that makes this exhibit so emotionally powerful: 'I found myself getting choked up when [I] saw the actual remaining articles from one of the little girls….That was a teary moment for me, personally'; 'Brace yourself for tears. I cried when I saw those shoes'; 'The display of personal belongings found with the body of one of the slain girls…was very impactful on an emotional level for me.'[135] By educating visitors about one of the most tragic events of the civil rights era in an institution that sits directly across the street from the site of

[135] *TripAdvisor* (16 May 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r272446793-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 30 July 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (28 December 2014) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r246222670-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 2 July 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (3 March 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r257550228-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 2 July 2016].

tragedy (a site that many museum-goers explore on the same day as their museum visit), the display is made even more powerful by the feelings of locality and proximity.

In the NMAAHC, curators made a similarly bold decision in representing civil rights injustice. In *Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom*, visitors have the option of entering a room dedicated to Emmett Till. In this room, photographs are not allowed, the mood darkens, and the crowd becomes somber. Displays throughout the room discuss Till, his mother, the murder and ensuing trial, and the impact that Till's death had on civil rights activism. Though visitors thoughtfully read through these annotations, the centerpiece of this room steals the attention. In the back of the room, behind rope but still clearly visible, lies Till's original casket. This unique artifact is a product from a 2005 exhumation—ordered by the Department of Justice upon the reopening of the criminal investigation—and the reburial of Till in a new coffin.[136] After this process, Till's family decided to donate the original casket to the NMAAHC.

Simeon Wright, Till's cousin who was with him on the night of the murder, said of the donation:

> *This casket's going to help millions to understand and believe that racism, the Jim Crow system, was alive and well in America back in 1955….[I]t's going to speak louder than pictures, books or films because this casket is the very image of what has been written or displayed on these pictures.*[137]

Though Lonnie Bunch admits that he struggled with the decision of whether or not the museum should accept and display the donation—asking himself '[w]as that too ghoulish?'—deputy director Kinshasha Holman Conwill calls the casket 'one of our most

[136] Emmett Till's cousin, Simeon Wright, explained the reasoning for the exhumation: 'In 2005, we had to exhume Emmett's body. The State of Mississippi would not reopen the case unless we could prove that the body buried at the cemetery was Emmett's. State law prohibited us from placing that casket back into the grave, so we had to bury him in a new casket.' See: Abby Callard, 'Emmett Till's Casket Goes to the Smithsonian', *Smithsonian* (November 2009) <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/emmett-tills-casket-goes-to-the-smithsonian-144696940/> [accessed on 17 September 2017].
[137] Callard, 'Emmett Till's Casket Goes to the Smithsonian'.

sacred objects'.[138] The Till room is frequently mentioned by visitors: 'The Emmett [T]ill exhibit was powerful and was definitely a tear jerker.'; 'I think that the single most searing, unforgettable and powerful exhibit in all of Washington DC…is Emmett Till's coffin….Every American, especially every white American like me should walk through Emmett Till's memorial…'; 'Bring a hankie for the Emmett Till Memorial.'[139] This memorial is perhaps the riskiest display in the NMAAHC, and this risk has become the most impactful piece of the entire museum journey.

While the themes of justice and injustice are often examined separately, curators at the BCRI and NMAAHC also consider their intertwined relationship in a civil rights framework. Both institutions examine the intersecting points of these themes in displays on activism. At the BCRI, a display on the Selma to Montgomery marches ends in victory—marked by the signing of the Voting Rights Act. In this way the exhibit concludes on a high note with an example of federal justice culminating the bloody road to black enfranchisement. On the other hand, the smaller photographs on the wall focus on the violence directed toward the marchers by the police—an example of not just injustice, but injustice by government force. The NMAAHC applies a similar framework to displays exploring such topics as the Freedom Rides and the Freedom Summer. In both of these displays, stories of violence and injustice are tempered by instances of (often delayed) legal justice.[140]

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[138] Krissah Thompson, 'Emmett Till's casket is a "sacred object" at the African American museum', *Chicago Tribune* (19 August 2016) <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-emmett-till-casket-african-american-museum-20160818-story.html> [accessed on 17 September 2017].

[139] *TripAdvisor* (24 September 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r527126166-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 12 October 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (4 October 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r529932979-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 12 October 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (4 September 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r521255312-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 12 October 2017].

[140] It should be noted that the struggle between federal and state governments, the murders' short sentences, the event's impact on the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, subsequent research conducted

Both museums also examine the dynamic between justice and injustice in displays exploring the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing. For a decade and a half the Klansmen responsible, though known, remained unprosecuted. Finally, justice was served in 1977 when Robert Chambliss was convicted of first degree murder, and in 2001 and 2002 when Thomas Blanton and Bobby Cherry (respectively) were convicted of four counts of murder and delivered life sentences. Due to the nature of this event, effective displays include the bombing itself, as well as the legal trials in subsequent decades. The BCRI covers both elements extensively, while the NMAAHC focuses solely on the violence and does not provide information about the delayed convictions of the surviving Klansmen. This omitted information is an important aspect of the narrative and could also be used to prompt a broader discussion about delayed justice from the Jim Crow era, incorporating other examples of white supremacist criminals who were not convicted until decades later. The fact that the NMAAHC does not discuss themes such as delayed justice is surprising, as convictions and acquittals of white supremacists receives significant attention earlier in *Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom*.[141] In these and other displays, both the BCRI and the NMAAHC succeed at rejecting a binary view of history, acknowledging instead that history is nuanced and that events cannot often be allocated to one category.

CRITICIZING AND CREDITING THE GOVERNMENT

At various points in the black freedom struggle the federal government has been responsible for both justice and injustice, alternating between the role of friend and foe to the African-American community. Because civil rights scholarship began with a top-down

by Jerry Mitchell, and a final prosecution in 2005 provide plenty of material that has not yet been engaged with in the NMAAHC's representation of the Freedom Summer.

[141] In this display, visitors learn about Harry and Harriette Moore (who were killed after extensive civil rights legislative activism), John C. Jones (a veteran killed by police), Gertrude Perkins (who was raped in Montgomery), and Mack Ingram (who was sentenced to jail and probation for 'reckless eyeballing').

approach, the historiography is ripe with information about the government and its varying relationship with civil rights. The presidential administrations of Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson have been analyzed within a civil rights framework, and studies examining the role of Congress have largely criticized its racial record; moreover, thematic studies on issues like voting rights and desegregation have allowed academics to compare presidential performances, transcending the boundaries of just one administration.[142]

The extensive research examining the federal role in the struggle for civil rights has not yet found its museological counterpart. Of the three American museums in this study, only one of them engages with the government in its displays.[143] In *Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom* the NMAAHC incorporates civil rights allies like Attorney General Robert Kennedy, President John F. Kennedy, and President Lyndon B. Johnson—as well as important legislation like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965—into its displays. The acknowledgement of white political allies is welcome, particularly because these types of alliances are sometimes neglected in exhibits on slavery or Jim Crow. There is slightly more work to be done here, and it would be interesting to see more information about these federal civil rights efforts. Likewise, Vice President

[142] For more on the role of presidents, Congress, and legislation in the civil rights era, see for example: William C. Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1970); John Herbers, *The Lost Priority: What Happened to the Civil Rights Movement in America?* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1970); Victor S. Navasky, *Kennedy Justice* (New York: Atheneum, 1971); Donald R. McCoy and Richard T. Ruetten, *Quest and Response: Minority Rights and the Truman Administration* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1973); Steven F. Lawson, *Black Ballots: Voting Rights in the South, 1944-1969* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976); Carl M. Brauer, *John F. Kennedy and the Second Reconstruction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977); Harris Wofford, *Of Kennedy and Kings: Making Sense of the Sixties* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1980); James C. Duram, *A Moderate Among Extremists: Dwight D. Eisenhower and the School Desegregation Crisis* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1981); Catherine A. Barnes, *Journey from Jim Crow: The Desegregation of Southern Transit* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Robert Frederick Burk, *The Eisenhower Administration and Civil Rights* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984); Charles Whalen and Barbara Whalen, *The Longest Debate: A Legislative History of the 1964 Civil Rights Act* (Cabin John: Seven Locks Press, 1985); Michal Belknap, *Federal Law and Southern Order: Racial Violence and Constitutional Conflict in the Post-Brown South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987); David A. Nichols, *A Matter of Justice: Eisenhower and the Beginning of the Civil Rights Revolution* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007).

[143] Because this section focuses specifically on how museums represent the American government during the civil rights era, it will emphasize the American museums in this study. For an analysis of the International Slavery Museum's representation of injustice during the Jim Crow era, see the previous section of this chapter.

Hubert Humphrey—who, as a Senator, encouraged the Democratic Party to 'walk into the sunshine of human rights'—has been omitted from this narrative.[144] Overall, however, this is the most extensive engagement with the federal government's role in the black freedom struggle in this entire study, and should be credited for its inclusion of an often neglected aspect of this narrative.

Unlike the NMAAHC, the engagement with the federal government—particularly moments in which the federal government served as an ally to civil rights—is lacking at the DuSable and BCRI. The relationship between African Americans and the American government has been turbulent and complicated, and the government often worked against civil rights or ignored the efforts altogether. Despite this, the two groups have not always been at odds, and the lack of representation of federal support for civil rights advances an incomplete narrative about civil rights legislation.

It is noteworthy that the omission of federal government references is not restricted to the civil rights era. Museums could do far more to engage with this theme throughout American history. There are plenty of historical examples demonstrating some government commitment to African-American advancement, including the slavery debates at the

[144] Some critics may argue that black history museums are under no obligation to explore stories of white historical figures; thus, these people will likely find my calls for increased engagement with figures like the Kennedys, Johnson, and Humphrey—as well as similar calls in the previous chapter for more nuanced explorations of the Founding Fathers and John Quincy Adams—to be inappropriate. While I can respect this perspective, I disagree with the idea that representations of black history must include only black figures. African-American history, while focused on black experiences in America, also addresses the complexities of race relations, which inherently includes the perspectives, arguments, and efforts of black Americans' white counterparts. As Ira Berlin writes: 'History is about seamless relationships that cannot be parsed. Whatever the convenience of dividing the study of the past into components…it must encompass all people. Universities may teach courses on workers, women, and gays, but the history of workers cannot be separated from the history of bosses, that of women from that of men, and that of gays from that of straights….Although historians rarely succeed, their aim is to be universal and to connect all.' Thus, my argument is not that white figures are entitled to be present in black historical narratives (and their museological representations) or that they are under-represented elsewhere as were African Americans, but rather that these incorporations would help to present a more comprehensive tapestry of African-American experiences. These experiences did not occur within racial or societal vacuums; rather, they occurred in tandem with those of white (and other) Americans. As such, the most authentic museum displays explore this history of relationships, making room for those who significantly impacted what it meant to be black in America throughout the nation's history. See: Berlin, 'American Slavery in History and Memory', p. 1263.

Constitutional Convention, Congressional debates about the Thirteenth Amendment, the federal intervention during the Freedom Rides, and Lyndon B. Johnson and Hubert Humphrey's push for civil rights legislation in the 1960s—a bold political move that transformed both political parties into their more recognizable 21st century counterparts. Teaching visitors about these complex political alliances would not give too much credit to politicians, nor would it take well-earned credit away from activists. It would, however, provide an authentic, detailed perspective that strikes an appropriate balance between grassroots and federal power in the many fights for freedom and equality throughout American history.

CONCLUSION

Along with slavery, the civil rights era is the most recognizable historical period represented in black history museums. Due to its temporal closeness—many who personally experienced the era are still living—and its increasing relevance to modern American tensions, civil rights often serves as the cornerstone of these museum galleries. However, this familiarity can present challenges for curators representing the period. There are significant disparities between civil rights history and collective memory, and many visitors may have certain expectations of civil rights displays before even walking through the museum's doors. While historians often stress the grassroots, local efforts across the country, Americans tend to think of a singular, national movement centrally-led by 'Great Men'. This can be difficult for curators, who must strike balances between history and heritage, accuracy and authenticity, and education and entertainment. Despite this, curators have the tools to create powerful civil rights displays that prioritize authenticity and education—and, as demonstrated in this section, they are often successful.

POST-CIVIL RIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

Compared to the civil rights era, historical representations of the post-civil rights era can be somewhat less defined and comparatively multi-faceted. Whereas race was arguably the dominant factor of the civil rights era, race in the post-civil rights era was only one element (albeit, a significant one) in the turbulent period of the late 1960s and 1970s. During this time, debates over races intermingled with broader divisions over class, politics, gender, and war, and were impacted by shifts from nonviolence to the armed struggle for black advancement.[145] These intersections offer interesting possibilities to curators as the period can be considered within multiple frameworks, each producing fresh perspectives of an eventful decade. This section will focus on two primary elements of the post-civil rights era—the black power movement and popular culture—by analyzing their representations in the DuSable and NMAAHC.[146] In doing so, it will identify the various elements of racial understanding during this period, as well as the unique ways that representations of this era are relevant to the turbulence that Americans have been experiencing in the second decade of the 21st century.

THE LONG SHADOW OF NONVIOLENCE

The late 1960s ushered in a new era in the African-American freedom struggle, and the decade's final years saw a shift away from nonviolent approaches of the civil rights era

[145] This is not to suggest that there were not broader themes serving as a backdrop for civil rights—contemporary issues, most notably the Cold War and McCarthyism, significantly impacted debates about race. The text is merely arguing that the non-racial forces in American society grew stronger in the late 1960s and 1970s, adding new dimensions to racial advancement that did not exist to such a significant extent in the previous era.

[146] The BCRI and the ISM will not be included in this section. The BCRI largely ends its timeline in 1965 (when it turns its gaze outward and chronicles international human rights struggles), which was critically discussed in the previous section. The ISM engages so briefly with the American post-civil rights period that it does not lend itself to a comparative analysis here.

toward a more militant, confrontational approach demonstrated by black power advocates. Because these eras, as well as their representations in museums, are situated next to one another on a chronological timeline, the juxtaposition between the two can elevate one while denigrating the other. Both the DuSable and the NMAAHC make a clear distinction between civil rights and black power, and there is no evidence of the 'declension theory'—in which the age of black power is considered an unfortunate reaction to the decline of the nonviolent movement or a few violent years tagged onto the end of the civil rights period—in either of these displays.[147]

At the DuSable, the black power era is given considerably more attention and space in the museum journey than other periods included in 'Freedom and Resistance'. Rather than conveying black power as a development of civil rights, the DuSable clearly presents the period as a rejection of nonviolent protest in which activists adopted a more proactive approach. Similarly, the NMAAHC narrative veers away from the civil rights declension theory, exploring the era in its own right and celebrating its accomplishments as distinct from those of earlier civil rights struggles. In fact, at times the narrative may subvert the declension theory entirely, as it seems to refrain from objectively criticizing some of the era's more contentious aspects. In both museums, then, black power is not considered to be a problematic reaction to the perceived failures of nonviolent protests; quite the contrary,

[147] For more on the declension theory, see for example: Joe Street, 'The Historiography of the Black Panther Party', *Journal of American Studies* 44.2 (2010) 351-375 (p. 352). While the declension theory considers the shift away from nonviolence as a negative reaction to peaceful protest in the civil rights era, it is interesting to consider the current connotations with these two activist approaches. Victoria J. Gallagher explains: '[N]on-violent social change is currently not valued as highly as it was in the early part of the civil rights movement. Consider such cultural evidence as interpretations and responses to the Los Angeles riots after the Rodney King trial (e.g., celebrating the riot as a revolutionary act, suggesting that rioting was an acceptable means for expressing rage at an intransigent culture, and so on), and pop culture recreations of history and heroes that embrace more direct, often violent meant of resistance (e.g., the iconography of Malcolm X and the proliferation of T-shirts, ball caps, and jewelry emblazoned with the slogan, "By any means necessary").' While the declension theory may have been held by some, it is also true that other social-cultural circles have subverted this concept, empathizing more with the militancy of black power advocates than with the nonviolence of civil rights activists. See: Gallagher, 'Memory and Reconciliation in the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute', p. 311.

the period is represented as a necessary and natural reaction to a movement that failed to progress African Americans' place in society.

Moreover, the juxtaposition between civil rights and black power narratives is framed differently in each museum due to gallery/exhibit layouts.[148] The DuSable examines both civil rights and black power (and the rest of the African-American historical timeline) in 'Freedom and Resistance'. Because the eras are considered chronologically, they are positioned one after another, and a tone shift rejects the declension theory and encourages visitors to consider the two periods distinctly. In contrast, in the NMAAHC the civil rights era marks the end of *Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom*, and the next gallery—*A Changing America*—located on the next floor up begins with an examination of black power. In this way, visitors are encouraged to consider civil rights alongside events of the first half of the century, and black power alongside more recent events.[149]

In addition to the distinction between civil rights and black power, it is interesting to consider each institution's black power timeline. The DuSable adheres to a broad, firm timeline of 1966-82 to examine black power. By clearly defining the period's parameters, visitors are made aware of its overlap with civil rights, the height of the movement, and the time during which the movement dissolves. The NMAAHC, on the other hand, does not

[148] Though this topic is not currently addressed in these museums, it would be interesting to counter the declension theory with information about the links between black power sentiment and the rise of black history museums. Andrea Burns explains that early black museum leaders applied aspects of black power—particularly black pride, community uplift, and activism—to the development of neighborhood museums. With the exception of differing views on separatism (Burns explains that '[s]uccessful black museum makers understood that whites could be important to the black museum movement, though not central to its vision'), Burns argues that the political and cultural ideologies of black power lived on in these museums after the movement's decline. She writes: 'While black neighborhood museums have evolved in mission and physical form since their inception, the grassroots applications of the Black Power Movement—those which call for knowledge and pride in one's heritage—persevere in their daily work.' In this way, black history museums have strong connections to black power principles. This inclusion would not only educate visitors about the root of black history museums (a topic that is sorely missing from museological discourse), but would also counter the declension theory by offering insight into the impact that the black power movement—distinct from civil rights—influenced the African-American museum movement. See: Andrea A. Burns, *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), p. 157-159.

[149] The way that the NMAAHC uses this approach to differentiate between the civil rights and black power eras is an example of how museums can use layouts to contribute toward narratives.

clearly indicate the black power timeline. Though the beginning of *A Changing America* points to Stokely Carmichael's call for 'Black Power' in 1966 and King's assassination in 1968 as catalysts for the movement, there is an absence of dates in subsequent displays. Instead of having one space within the gallery set aside for black power, displays examining the period are dispersed among others exploring the Poor People's Campaign, the Black Arts Movement, the Black is Beautiful movement, and many other topics that are crucial to understanding the direction of African-American history from the late 1960s onward. Because of this layout—in which visitors can wander around looking at displays in any order—a timeline is not provided, nor is it clear when the museum considers the black power era to have ended.

'Foundations of Black Power' display, NMAAHC

While the DuSable makes almost no mention of King's 1968 assassination, the NMAAHC uses the event to transition the museum journey from civil rights to black power, pointing to his murder as an event that marked the shift away from nonviolent, integration-focused principles. An entire display examines King's death; the attention is diverted away from the conspiracies surrounding his assassination, focusing instead on the societal impact of the murder. Placards entitled 'The Death of Martin Luther King Jr.',

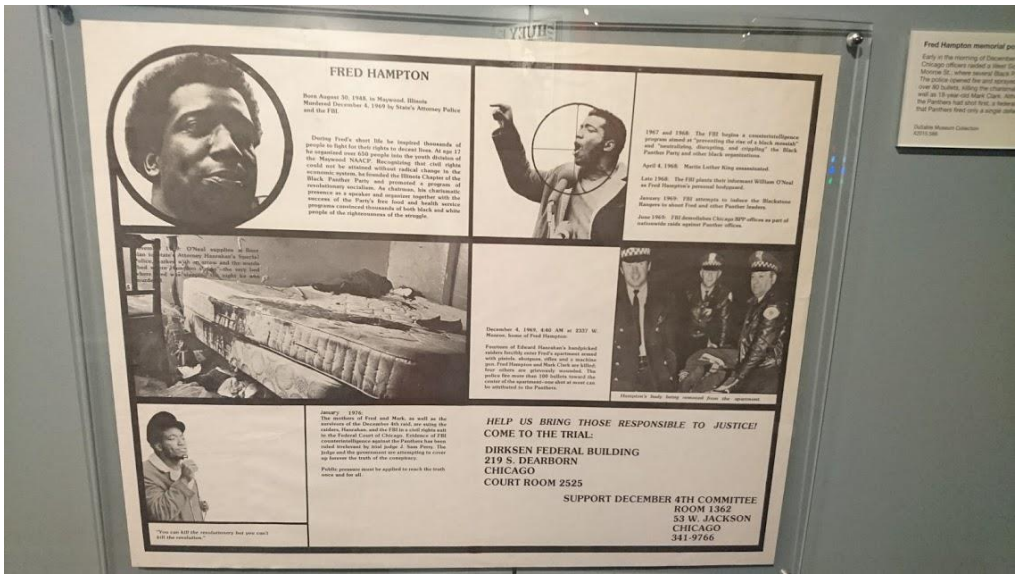
'Mourning the Death of Martin Luther King Jr.', 'The Meaning of King's Death', and 'The Aftermath of King's Assassination' thoroughly—and, at times, repetitively—detail the cultural significance of King's death and its impact on the move toward black power ideologies. Both the narrative and the layout align in this moment in the museum journey, and visitors step away from this display entering both the frame of mind and the gallery exploring the history and legacy of black power.

In addition to the timeline, the geographic focus of black power displays in both museums is worth discussing briefly. Though the NMAAHC maintains a national emphasis in its black power displays, the DuSable utilizes a localized narrative to highlight the ways that black power and the Black Panther Party impacted Chicago. A sign for the Illinois chapter's free breakfast program, a Chicago riot helmet, and a flyer for the People's Rally contribute to the localization in these displays, and a focus on Fred Hampton and his murder continues to frame the narrative around Chicago events.[150] This use of localization creates a unique narrative positioned within the rich history of the surrounding city—an opportunity that is missed in other areas of DuSable's museum journey.

Black power history is largely comprised of political, militaristic, philanthropic, and spiritual elements, but museums can cultivate specific narratives by emphasizing or glossing over certain aspects of the movement's complex past. Both the DuSable and NMAAHC downplay black power militarism by drawing attention to other parts of the history. The DuSable acknowledges the militarism in the group, but argues that their militancy 'was distorted by the government and the media, often portrayed as a threat to white society and authority.' To counter the connotation between black power advocates and violence, DuSable displays instead focus on police brutality against these individuals,

[150] Fred Hampton was an activist and chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party. He was killed at age 21 in a police raid in 1969. See: Jeffrey Haas, *The Assassination of Fred Hampton: How the FBI and the Chicago Police Murdered a Black Panther* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2009).

as well as spying efforts by COINTELPRO.[151] The narrative particularly focuses on the killing of Fred Hampton, and disturbing photographs from the raid reinforce the idea that black power activists were the victims—rather than merely the perpetrators—of violence.



Justice for Fred Hampton poster, DuSable Museum

Similarly, the NMAAHC de-emphasizes the role of violence in the movement by directing the narrative toward other elements of this history. The militarism of the movement is only briefly mentioned in various displays, but there is not an entire display devoted to this nuanced topic. In one annotation, the museum simply states: 'The Black Power Movement frightened most of white America and unsettled scores of black Americans.'—arguably an over-simplistic statement that fails to dissect the militancy of the group and the various reactions to this movement. Attention is re-directed away from militarism toward topics like religion. The examination of the dynamic between the Nation of Islam and black power leaders positions the period within a theological framework, resulting in displays that are innovative, if sometimes superficial.[152]

[151] COINTELPRO refers to the FBI's Counterintelligence Program that aimed to discredit, infiltrate, and spy on political organizations deemed radical by the government. See: Nelson Blackstock, *Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976).

[152] The controversial elements (such as ideas about the 'blue eyed devil') of the Nation of Islam were visibly missing from these discussions, which resulted in a fairly one-dimensional narrative. Contrasted with the

Both museums emphasize the philanthropic and community work undertaken by those within the movement. The DuSable points to the Black Panther's free breakfast programs to counter misconceptions about the group. This creates a narrative that seems consciously crafted to center on the persecution of this charity-driven group by police and the FBI—a stark contrast to the visions of excessive militarism and violence that exist in the media-shaped master narrative of the movement.[153] The NMAAHC takes a similar approach, highlighting charity efforts such as the Free Health Clinic, the Free Food Program, and the Freedom School. Like the DuSable's black power narrative, the NMAAHC's series of displays prioritizes topics like philanthropy, community uplift, and religion to reframe the movement in a more positive light.

NMAAHC's engagement with Bill Cosby's sexual assault or its criticism of misogyny and violence in some forms of hip-hop (see the next section of this chapter), it is clear that the museum is capable of conveying complex narratives that acknowledge controversies or issues within the black community. Victoria J. Gallagher wrote about presenting figures as uncomplicated or unproblematic in her review of the BCRI. Though she was writing about a different institution and topic (in this case, the BCRI's portrayal of Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth), her analysis rings true when considered against the omission of the more contentious elements of black power and the Nation of Islam. She writes: 'Though Rev. Shuttlesworth was and is admired for his bravery and energy, he was also criticized for being difficult to work with, headstrong, undemocratic, publicity driven, ego-centric, and the like. Memorializing him just off the entrance [to the BCRI] is a way of honoring him without allowing his contested story to take over.' See: Gallagher, 'Memory and Reconciliation in the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute', pp. 315-316.

[153] As Peniel E. Joseph explains: 'The movement's heyday is marked in the American imagination by race riots, gun-toting black militants, and the cultural flourishes of bold Afros, African dashikis, and militant poetry. Beyond the era's verbal pyrotechnics, racial controversies, and stylistic bombast is a fascinating history of social and political transformation—one that at times shared common goals and objectives, if not strategies and tactics, with the more richly document civil rights movement.' See: Peniel E. Joseph, 'Rethinking the Black Power Era', *The Journal of Southern History* 75.3 (2009), 707-716 (p. 708).

Free breakfast sign, DuSable Museum

While the DuSable situates the movement entirely within an American context, the NMAAHC uses an international scope to explore the ways that global movements influenced black power advocates, as well as the impact that these advocates then had on other social movements. This is a departure from the previous gallery's representation of civil rights, which is considered almost exclusively in an American framework. In fact, international connections to civil rights are only mentioned in this display when the narrative explains that liberation movements in Africa and Southeast Asia inspired more radical African Americans to retire King's nonviolent methods and adopt a more militant stance. In other words, the internationalization that was central to King's ideology was not discussed, but global influences are incorporated into the narrative when referencing a shift away from King's nonviolence methods. Despite this slight distortion, the NMAAHC's broad narrative effectively connects black power to global struggles for human rights, and its references to the struggles of Native Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, woman, and the LGBT community encourage visitors to reflect on the wider legacies of the black power era.

USING THE LENS OF POPULAR CULTURE

While this thesis has avoided engaging with topics that are only explored in one institution, the NMAAHC's popular culture exhibits deserve recognition. Popular culture has long transcended social barriers, and the representation of this impact in the NMAAHC stands out as one of the museum's greatest achievements.[154] The NMAAHC examines two major aspects of popular culture—sports and the arts. *Sports: Leveling the Playing Field* makes up a large part of the *Community Galleries* floor and examines African-American contributions to American sports; similarly, the entire top floor, *Culture Galleries,* as well as some displays in *A Changing America,* celebrates black excellence in art, music, culture, and media. Though some of these displays are based on earlier decades of the 20th century, they largely focus on the achievements and appeal of African-American popular culture in the post-civil rights period.

Sports highlights black athletic achievements and examines the intertwined history of sports, politics, and race relations. The exhibit centers around an impressive collection of sports memorabilia, including Joe Louis' boxing gloves, Muhammad Ali's robes, gloves, and punching bag, Michael Jordan's Bulls jersey, Tiger Woods' red Nike polo, and a number of jerseys, baseball bats and balls, gloves, masks, cleats, sports cards, and contemporary collectors' items like cereal boxes or magazine covers. Several life-sized statues are situated around the exhibit, adding a unique element to the gallery atmosphere. Visitors can take pictures with the 1968 Olympics Black Power saluters, Jackie Robinson sliding into home, Jesse Owens in mid-sprint, Michael Jordan shooting the basketball, or the beaming and waving Williams sisters. These displays are further complemented by videos positioned throughout the exhibit, playing key moments from African-American

[154] For more on the intersection of African Americans and popular culture, see for example: Kevern Verney, *African Americans and US Popular Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003); Richard Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic: Politics and Popular Culture in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Brian Ward (ed.), *Media, Culture, and the African American Freedom Struggle* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001); W. Fitzhugh Brundage (ed.), *Beyond Blackface: African Americans and the Creation of American Popular Culture, 1890-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

sports history. Images and text also add to the aesthetic, demonstrating black prowess in boxing, golf, tennis, basketball, baseball, running, and the Olympics.

Baseball display, NMAAHC

Jackie Robinson statue, NMAAHC

The narrative in *Sports* focuses on three primary aspects: the way that black athletic participation has been interwoven into American history, the impact of black athletic achievement on the public perception of African Americans, and the link between sports and politics. Sports have played an important role in American history and, as such, have also functioned as a public stage for society's tensions about issues like race and class to play out in a unique way. The gallery's displays teach visitors about familiar historical issues like slavery, segregation, gender inequality, the Great Migration, the world wars, Hitler's theory of Aryan superiority, the civil rights era, the Vietnam War, and the AIDS epidemic; moreover, visitors will learn the histories of these sports and their place in the nation's past. Through this examination, visitors can garner a deeper appreciation for sports like basketball (developed in the early 1900s to 'help instill middle-class values and promote good health as part of the broader campaign for racial uplift') or boxing (a political sport that has allowed African Americans 'to challenge their enslavement and the discrimination of the Jim Crow era'). While information about the dynamic between African Americans and athletic ability will likely inspire many visitors, these displays also

present the opportunity for curators to address the myth of racial superiority in sports.[155] Adding this discussion to the sports narrative in this gallery would better balance the positives of black athletic achievement (highlighted below), ensuring that visitors also learn about the problematic nature of this sports history.

The emphasis of this gallery is just as much on inclusion as exclusion. As African Americans became increasingly incorporated into integrated sports teams, their athletic abilities broke down societal barriers. Much like music, film, and television, sports attracted the attention of white Americans toward African Americans through the lens of entertainment. In this new perspective, white Americans' misconceptions about African Americans were challenged within an athletic framework, and pillars of sportsmanship—such as teamwork and dedication—began to break down racial barriers. Stereotypes such as laziness and inability became subverted, leaving new impressions of a disciplined work ethic and an ability to achieve success.

Displays in *Sports* highlight the ways that black athletes came to embody the ideals of freedom, equality, and ability, contributing to their gradual acceptance by white Americans. Of course, this American patriotism was challenged at times—for example, when Muhammad Ali refused to fight in Vietnam—but overall, sports have contributed to the transition from societal exclusion to inclusion, and from segregation to integration.[156] Furthermore, visitors learn that black athletes have long been aware that their athletic

[155] For more on the idea that African Americans are inherently better at athletic endeavors, see: John Entine, *Taboo: Why Black Athletes Dominate Sports and Why We Are Afraid to Talk About It* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001). For a direct rebuttal to Entine's book—and for more on the argument that this line of reasoning is a dangerous myth—see: Ian B. Kerr, 'The Myth of Racial Superiority in Sports', *The Hilltop Review* 4.4 (2010), 19-27. See also: John Milton Hoberman, *Darwin's Athletes: How Sports Has Damaged Black America and Preserved the Myth of Race* (Boston: Mariner Books, 1997).

[156] For more on African Americans in sports, see for example: Gary A. Sailes, *African Americans in Sports* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998); Kenneth L. Shropshire, *In Black and White: Race and Sports in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); William C. Rhoden, *Forty Million Dollar Slaves: The Rise, Fall, and Redemption of the Black Athlete* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2007); David K. Wiggins, *More Than a Game: A History of the African American Experience in Sport* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018); Howard Bryant, *The Heritage: Black Athletes, a Divided America, and the Politics of Patriotism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018).

victories or failures would transcend beyond the world of sports as they were considered to be public representatives for an entire race. The NMAAHC displays demonstrate this concept effectively, teaching visitors that, as one placard reads, sports (the Olympics in this case) 'provided an opportunity for [African Americans] to display important Olympic ideals—character, discipline, and intellectual capacity—before a worldwide audience.'

The NMAAHC narrative in this gallery highlights athletes' activism nearly as much as it does the sports themselves. This narrative manifests itself in many displays, but one of the most interesting examples of sports activism is represented in the Muhammad Ali displays. Though Ali's boxing prowess is acknowledged, a greater emphasis is placed on his activism and humanitarian efforts. Another interesting display centers on the Mexico City Olympics protest of 1968. Visitors take turns standing in front of the life-sized statues of Tommie Smith and John Carlos with heads bowed and a single fist raised. Though there is a missed opportunity to correct misconceptions about Peter Norman, this display demonstrates the history of activism in sports and the cultural impact of these protests.[157] The relationship between sports and activism continues to command the narrative throughout this gallery, instilling in visitors a thorough understanding of the ways that politics has historically intersected with the world of sports.

[157] Australian Peter Norman—the third man in the famous photograph at the 1968 Olympics—is often either ignored or misunderstood within the popular understanding of this historic sports moment. While Americans Tommie Smith and John Carlos are celebrated as martyrs who sacrificed their future Olympic careers after raising their fists (they were banned from the Olympics for life), Peter Norman is often overlooked or branded as an uncomfortable bystander. Contrary to these misunderstandings, Norman was aware of Smith and Carlos' plan beforehand. In fact, when Carlos left his pair of black gloves at the Olympic village, it was Norman who suggested that they each wear one of Smith's gloves; it was then that Norman borrowed a badge reading 'Olympic Project for Human Rights' (an organization that opposed racism in sports) from an American rower in order to show solidarity at the podium. Upon return to Australia, Norman was cut from the Munich team and ostracized from sports, which effectively ended his career. Even when Sydney hosted the 2000 Olympics, Norman—the country's greatest Olympic sprinter—was not was not invited to the event. When Americans learned of Norman's exclusion, the United States Olympic Committee flew him to Sydney to be part of their delegation. James Montague, 'The third man: The forgotten Black Power hero', *CNN* (25 April 2012) <http://www.cnn.com/2012/04/24/sport/olympics-norman-black-power/index.html> [accessed on 30 September 2017]; Adam Baidawi, 'N.F.L. Protests Draw Attention—and Comparisons—in Australia', *The New York Times* (27 September 2017) <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/27/sports/nfl-protests-australia-peter-norman.html?mcubz=1> [accessed on 30 September 2017].

This aspect of the gallery's narrative is particularly interesting amid current debates about sports activism and athletes' role in broader discussions about free speech and patriotism. Perhaps reading about Ali's refusal to join the US Army during the Vietnam War amid criticism of Ali being unpatriotic—as well as looking at pictures of Ali surrounded by other black athletes in a show of support and solidarity—may remind visitors that modern NFL players should not be condemned for bringing politics into sports.[158] Quite the contrary, sports have always been inseparable from political issues; therefore, the true strength of *Sports* is not just that it provides a space in which visitors can celebrate black athletic achievements, but, perhaps more importantly, that its displays focus on the ways that African-American athletes have used their platforms to enact social change reaching far beyond the ring, field, or court.

In addition to this engagement with sports, the NMAAHC also examines African-American prowess in the arts in the uppermost floor of the museum, the *Culture Galleries*. The gallery examines a wide range of artistic expressions, including fine art, literature, music, theater, television, stand-up comedy, and film. The memorabilia on this floor is extensive and will likely impress visitors. Noteworthy items include Chuck Berry's red Cadillac, the P-Funk Mothership, James Browns' shoes, and Louis Armstrong's trumpet, as well as a wide range of personal items that had belonged to stars like Little Richard,

[158] Against the backdrop of the Trump administration and the ongoing debates about the National Anthem protests, many Republican politicians and pundits have criticized athletes for contributing to the political discourse. Fox pundit Laura Ingraham, for example, ranted about LeBron James' political comments and concluded that he should 'shut up and dribble'. In his review of the NMAAHC for *The Guardian* Steven Thrasher connects *Sports* (specifically the Olympics statue) to modern debates: 'The statue is so central to the sports section, I realized how ridiculous it is when racists try to write off football player Colin Kaepernick's refusal to endorse the national anthem. When black athletes are supposed to sign on to symbols of nationalism, their participation can be used to signal that there is nothing racially wrong with the nation; but when they refuse to go along, their refusal highlights problems so powerfully, a momentary protest can be remembered for decades.' See: Steven W. Thrasher, 'The Smithsonian's African American museum—a monument to respectability politics', *The Guardian* (16 September 2016) <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2016/sep/16/smithsonian-museum-african-american-history-respectability-politics> [accessed on 24 September 2016]; Emily Sullivan, 'Laura Ingraham Told LeBron James To Shut Up And Dribble; He Went To The Hoop', *NPR* (19 February 2018) <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/02/19/587097707/laura-ingraham-told-lebron-james-to-shutup-and-dribble-he-went-to-the-hoop?t=1544193764054> [accessed on 7 June 2018].

Michael Jackson, Diana Ross, Jimi Hendrix, and Public Enemy. In addition to this music collection, the museum has also amassed a fascinating collection of items that celebrate African Americans on the stage and screen. Pieces in 'Taking the Stage' include a suit and dress worn by Sherman Helmsley and Isabel Sanford in *The Jeffersons*, the Lions jacket worn by Eddie Murphy in *Beverly Hills Cop II*, an *I Spy* comic book, and other signature items from movies like *Sister Act* and *Twelve Years a Slave*. One of the most captivating pieces of the screen collection actually appears downstairs in *A Changing America*, where Oprah Winfrey's set couch and one of her dresses pays tribute to the influential star.

Oprah Winfrey display, NMAAHC

The 'Musical Crossroads' exhibit in the *Culture Galleries* places a strong emphasis on the African roots of African-American music, creating a link between the culture emphasis in the museum's uppermost gallery and the exploration of West African history in its lowermost gallery. In a placard entitled 'The Roots of African American Music', visitors learn that enslaved Africans 'brought with them a wide array of cultural traditions and performance practices' to the Americas. These traditions preserved the cultures of West Africa and manifested themselves in ways that would establish a distinct black music presence in America. This narrative intertwines the development of black music with the history of the African diaspora. Beginning the exploration of familiar black musicians with

a display on the African origins of black music is an effective way of contextualizing visitors' modern understanding of music.

Further into the museum journey, the narrative shifts to an international scope when explaining the global influence of black music, touting that 'much of what the world has learned about the United States has been through African American music.' This theme of an African diaspora connected by black music demonstrates that music, like sports, is a language spoken by people of all races and nationalities. As such, it creates a unique space in which people can come together to enjoy a common form of entertainment. Explicitly identifying links between historical themes and eras is not common in museum displays, which, even in thematic displays like *Culture Galleries*, tend to categorize displays chronologically; however, this music display serves as an example of the NMAAHC stepping away from this norm—and the display is stronger for it.

Like sports, the arts have long served as a vehicle for racial conversations and evolving race relations.[159] The arts displays at the NMAAHC largely focus on artistic expression, political activism, and cultural empowerment—an important dynamic that has enabled African Americans to influence society. These displays highlight the ways that politically-inspired music by groups like Public Enemy contributed to this cultural empowerment by bringing important discussions to the stage and radio. Importantly, the narrative includes criticism of the violence and misogyny that has developed in some branches of hip-hop, and it credits female artists, such as Missy Elliot, for challenging these issues through empowering feminist messages. By highlighting different examples of black musicians contributing to the political conversation while also criticizing issues within hip-hop, the narrative effectively emphasizes the empowering potential of music—particularly for marginalized communities—in an effective and balanced way.

[159] For more on African Americans and the arts, see further reading suggested in footnote 154 in this chapter.

Themes of activism and cultural empowerment continue in the displays exploring black television and film. The screen proved to be an effective way to challenge stereotypes and brings new ideas into the living rooms of white families. The character-focused atmosphere of the screen allowed white people to fade into racial acceptance more easily by first accepting a character and, at a slower pace, accepting the black actor/actress who portrayed that character. Displays focus on the empowering nature of shows like *Soul Train*, crediting them for providing 'a point of identification and a sense of pride for audiences and performers alike.' This speaks to the larger emphasis throughout the gallery on not only using the screen to communicate to white audiences about racial stereotypes, but also using this platform to create a collective identity and community among black viewers. Moreover, the narrative emphasizes the duality of performers like Ira Aldridge and Paul Robeson, who were gifted entertainers as well as strong representatives for black issues. Finally, shows like *The Cosby Show*, *The Jeffersons*, and *Good Times* serve as an important component of this gallery's narrative, and they (among many others) are celebrated for demonstrating to white viewers the humor, family values, and morality of African Americans.[160]

[160] These three shows may have commonalities, but they each provided unique messages for American audiences. *The Cosby Show* offered insight into a strong, successful, and highly-educated family unit. The parents' professions and the family's upper-middle class stature demonstrated black success in ways that had not yet been shown on television. *The Jeffersons*—a spinoff of *All in the Family*—demonstrated the theme of upward mobility, as the family's segue from the original show to their new spinoff followed their move from a small house in a working class neighborhood to a wealthy apartment unit following George Jefferson's success in the laundry business. *Good Times*, on the other hand, focused on the realities of financial hardship and life in the projects. Despite the family's economic circumstances, the show emphasized the way Florida and James Evans held their family together amid struggle. It should also be noted here that Bill Cosby was originally meant to play a much larger part in the NMAAHC, though the museum's engagement with Cosby has been drastically reduced in the wake of his sexual misconduct. This is addressed in an annotation about Cosby, which ends by telling visitors: 'In recent years, revelations about alleged sexual misconduct have cast a shadow over Cosby's entertainment career and severely damaged his reputation.' In late September 2018 Cosby was sentenced to 3-10 years in prison for sexual assault. The museum annotation has likely been changed to address these updates, but I have not been to the museum since his conviction. See: Eric Levenson and Aaron Cooper, 'Bill Cosby sentenced to 3 to 10 years in prison for sexual assault', *CNN* (26 September 2018) <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/09/25/us/bill-cosby-sentence-assault/index.html> [accessed on 6 October 2018].

While these displays are certainly entertaining and inspiring, they may be better balanced by more about negative black experiences in show business. For example, while the activism of actors is celebrated, visitors may not realize that these figures often experienced backlash for taking a stand, often struggling to find work after speaking out. Similarly, while visitors learn about the successes of black performers, they may not grasp the tendency for these celebrities to be exploited to benefit white commercial interests. By adding more information about the negative experiences of many black artists, the celebratory tone of the gallery would be tempered and visitors may gain a more authentic understanding of the topic.

Whether this foray into popular culture is considered beneficial or detrimental is subjective, and these representations are interesting to examine within the academic frameworks of authenticity/accuracy (with a specific focus on the balance between famous and ordinary experiences), entertainment/education, and ideas of linear progression in museum timelines. Before examining how each of these debates applies to the NMAAHC's representation of popular culture, it is worth noting that the museological engagement with this topic can be beneficial in helping visitors understand cultural facets of civil rights and post-civil rights history. For example, Brian Ward argues that political culture is reflective of the movement itself:

> *African American art and culture did not just reflect…putatively more important developments in the formal, organized, conventionally "political" freedom struggle; they also played an active role in creating that Movement, defining its goals and methods, and expressing them to both the black community and to a wider, whiter American public.*[161]

According to Ward, art and culture actively helped to advance civil rights; applying this argument to the NMAAHC's engagement with sports and the arts, then, suggests that the

[161] Brian Ward, 'Introduction. Forgotten Wails and Master Narratives: Media, Culture, and Memories of the Modern African American Freedom Struggle'. In Brian Ward (ed.), *Media, Culture, and the Modern African American Freedom Struggle* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 1-15 (pp. 2-3).

museological representation of popular culture is appropriate and insightful. These displays explore more than just the artistic or athletic abilities of famous figures--rather, they highlight the intersection between culture and politics to reflect the ways that culture was used as a vehicle for change during the mid- to late-20th century.

On the other hand, placing too much emphasis on famous figures can detract from ordinary people and experiences, creating inauthentic narratives that disproportionately accentuate the most spectacular elements of the past. In the case of the NMAAHC, *Sports* and *Culture Galleries* are physically separated from the three history galleries on lower levels. In some ways, this layout avoids a narrative in which fame detracts from ordinary experiences, as the more ordinary experiences represented in the history galleries do not have to directly compete with the celebrity element.[162] While the upper galleries do provide the lens of popular culture to visitors, then, the notion of celebrity does not overtly interfere with historical experiences from these periods.

In addition to questioning whether these galleries inauthentically emphasize fame, *Sports* and *Culture Galleries* are also interesting to consider within the framework of the entertainment/education debate. While this debate is often applied to more traditional historical displays, how does it fare when considered against displays that represent the history of entertainment?[163] These two galleries are certainly more likely to appeal to popular tastes than their historical counterparts on lower levels; however, the lively presentations of entertainment history arguably communicates narratives that may not be

[162] They do, however, have to compete with contemporary famous figures, as discussed in this thesis.
[163] The multimedia, high-tech approach used in these galleries is often used when representing entertainment history; however, these methods have been eschewed by the Delta Blues Museum in Mississippi, which opts instead for a simplistic approach. In his analysis of the museum, Stephen A. King explains: 'In contrast [to museums using technology to appeal to specific audiences], the Delta Blues Museum has on TV/VCR and a stereo system that pipes museum…into the exhibition hall.' The museum's former director said on the topic: '[Computerized exhibits] might impress some people, but I think most people just kind of like the sort of low-key ambiance that we've got.' While it is entirely possible that the museum has since updated its approach (the article was written in 2006), it remains true that museological representations of entertainment history do not necessarily equate to high-tech displays. See: Stephen A. King, 'Memory, Mythmaking, and Museums: Constructive Authenticity and the Primitive Blues Subject', *Southern Communication Journal* 71.3 (2006) 235-250 (p. 245).

possible in more reverent galleries. Thus, the popular appeal of *Sports* and *Culture Galleries* does not stunt visitor learning, but rather provides alternative methods for acquiring information about American history, demonstrating that education and entertainment are not inherently at odds.

Similar to questions about authenticity and the prioritization of entertainment over education, the NMAAHC's layout may reinforce a linear timeline in which the present is conveyed as less problematic than the past. As previously discussed, this six-story museum journey begins underground—dark, claustrophobic, tense—with a discussion of slavery. Following two other historical levels, as well as a main entry level, visitors then take the escalator upstairs. As they rise higher, layouts become airier, and the somber silence of lower floors is replaced by music, videos, laughter, and talking. While *Sports* and *Culture Galleries* top off the overall museum journey, they are considered distinct from the lower history galleries; as such, visitors may be able to compartmentalize the darker history below and the lighter atmosphere above.

Whether visitors can do so likely depends on foot patterns.[164] While visitors initially had to adhere to a specific museum route (from bottom to top), by the next year visitors were free to venture in any direction they wished. Though there is no available research on this topic, there are two plausible foot patterns. The first is for those who break their visit into at least two days—likely to be two successive days for out-of-town visitors or two non-successive days for locals. For this pattern, the museum could logically be split between the lower history galleries and the upper culture galleries. In this case, the history galleries would be digested as a single unit and, as a result, visitors would conclude their

[164] As Greg Dickinson, Brian L. Ott, and Aoki Eric write in their analysis of the Buffalo Bill Museum: '[T]he order of the exhibition creates a certain epistemology of the site, providing visitors with reading strategies to help decode the meanings as they move through the space.' They go on to explain how, because museum visitors must begin their museum journey with displays learning about Buffalo Bill's heroism as a true person (rather than his public persona), the entire narrative is shaped within an intentional framework. This example demonstrates the ways that narratives are impacted by museum journeys and foot patterns—a concept that this thesis has also explored. See: Greg Dickinson, Brian L. Ott, and Aoki Eric, 'Memory and Myth at the Buffalo Bill Museum', *Western Journal of Communication* 69.2 (2005), 85-108 (p. 90).

mental and emotional journeys at the end of *A Changing America*—which ends with explorations of late 20th and early 21st century racial issues—rather than the more colorful galleries upstairs.[165] Following this foot pattern, then, the upper galleries may not contribute to a linear understanding of history as they are likely to be consumed on a different visit.[166]

The second group, however, may be more susceptible to a linear timeline. These visitors—likely from out of town—consume the entire museum in one long day.[167] While it is possible to start in the upper galleries and end with the history galleries, it seems more likely that visitors work their way from the bottom upward, beginning their visit with the history galleries and concluding with *Sports* and *Culture Galleries*. In this case, these visitors have bookended their journey with the darkest and lightest galleries in the museum, providing a direct contrast between distant and recent histories. There is certainly

[165] In his review of the NMAAHC, Vann R. Newkirk II acknowledges the conclusion of the history galleries with a discussion of racial issues. He writes: 'The walk up through history doesn't end with the election of President Barack Obama, which is usually seen as a kind of a bookend on a tidy narrative of black American progress, but with interactives showing the rise of Black Lives Matter and the injustices that movement now faces. Given the structure of the exhibits below, that arrangement is predictable. Revolutions are displayed beside counter-revolutions, and protests beside the atrocities that sparked them. Even if the museum does take the civil-rights movement's core mantra of "We shall overcome" seriously, the exhibits appear to interpret that song as a call to action instead of as pure prophecy.' See: Newkirk II, 'How a Museum Reckons With Black Pain'.

[166] Lonnie Bunch addressed the topic of linear progress in an interview, though he seems to refer only to the history galleries. Referring to the design of the galleries, he explains: 'If you go through the history galleries, it's not a linear march to progress. It's up and back, up and back. It was a conscious decision, to say that there's no way to understand America without understanding that for all the moments of great change, there were moments of us trying to pull the country back. There has always been a struggle for the soul of America. And obviously, today, we continue to see that struggle.' See: Ryan P. Smith, 'Lonnie Bunch Looks Back on the Making of the Smithsonian's Newest Museum', *Smithsonian Magazine* (9 November 2017) <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/museum-director-lonnie-bunch-looks-back-year-one-making-smithsonians-newest-museum-180967173/> [accessed on 19 October 2018].

[167] This is particularly true because the museum can only be entered with passes, which can be difficult to obtain—even more than two years after its opening. While there are options to access same-day timed entry passes each day online (beginning at 6:30AM until passes run out) or, on certain days, by waiting in line at the museum, most visitors are granted admission through advanced timed entry passes. These passes must be booked considerably ahead of the scheduled visit. A limited number of passes are available online on the first Wednesday of each month for a later month—for example, at the time of writing tickets went live on October 3, 2018 for the month of January 2019—and the website warns that '[p]asses go very quickly when released'. Because of this difficult process, as well as busy tourist schedules on which the NMAAHC is most likely not the only stop, it is more likely that out-of-town visitors may limit their visit to a single day than their in-town counterparts. See: 'Timed Entry Passes', *NMAAHC* < https://nmaahc.si.edu/visit/passes>.

an argument to be made against this journey, as some visitors may fail to realize the importance of modern racial issues.

It is also possible, however, to argue that visitors ending their museum journey with the lighter upper galleries does not detract from the impressions made upon them by lower galleries. In this way, *Sports* and *Culture Galleries* may serve as a much-needed buffer between historical horrors presented in the lower galleries and modern tensions that they will face upon re-entering the world outside. With such a contentious cultural-political backdrop, which many agree is the most divisive period since the Civil War, perhaps visitors can seek refuge—if only for a few hours—in these uplifting galleries while remaining painfully aware of past and present issues in American society.[168] If this is true, the upper galleries may serve as a sanctuary, providing temporary relief from the draining, racially-charged reality that visitors experience regularly.

Regardless of these academic dissections of *Sports* and *Culture Galleries*, visitors often emphasize this portion of the museum journey in their reviews: 'Top floor was a mind blowing walk through contributions and inventions/developments in various areas of culture—music, art and craft, theatre, film, dance…It was absolutely spectacular.'; '[L]evels 3 and 4 are culture, most of which is entertainment and sports and they nail these sections—just like being at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame or any of the major sports museums. Very impressed and you could spend hours viewing the tons of well-presented memorabilia and reading.'; 'The upper floors cover the contributions of African Americans

[168] For more on current political divisions in American society, see for example: Thomas L. Friedman, 'The American Civil War, Part II', *The New York Times* (2 October 2018) <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/02/opinion/the-american-civil-war-part-ii.html?ribbon-ad-idx=4&src=trending> [accessed on 6 October 2018]; Julia Manchester, 'Analyst says US is most divided since Civil War', *The Hill* <https://thehill.com/hilltv/what-americas-thinking/409718-analyst-says-the-us-is-the-most-divided-since-the-civl-war> [accessed on 6 October 2018].

to history, public life, and culture. The expansive section on Music, TV, and Film is fabulous.'[169]

Because these galleries are so popular among visitors, it is fair to question whether other black history museums could adopt a similar method.[170] Though this inclusion may be an attractive option to other institutions, resource availability (both space and funding) make it unrealistic. With nearly 400,000 square feet and an annual budget exceeding $40 million, the NMAAHC has abundant space and funding—resources that are not shared by any other black history museum in the country.[171] Moreover, the scope of these galleries works better in a national museum that can celebrate African-American figures within the wide nationwide scope. Presumably, similar manifestations of these galleries in other museums would take a more regional or local focus; however, part of the appeal of *Sports* and *Culture Galleries* is its broad inclusion of figures from each state, as well as national teams representing the United States on the international stage. In short, then, this approach—grand, broad, and appealing—works much better in a resource-rich, national museum like the NMAAHC than in smaller museums around the nation.

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[169] *TripAdvisor* (21 October 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r462544446-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html> [accessed on 20 November 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (25 June 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r495823763-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 4 August 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (27 August 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d10895065-r518006393-National_Museum_of_African_American_History_and_Culture-Washington_DC_District_o.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 30 September 2017].

[170] In fact, the DuSable may incorporate a "Hall of Fame" for black athletes in the future. The museum is in the process of expanding into its Roundhouse, which will add 61,000 square foot to its exhibition space (doubling its current square footage). While a plan has not yet been finalized for this new space, the Hall of Fame has been one of the more promising proposals so far. See: 'A Fresh Start', *The Economist* (10 September 2015) <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2015/09/10/a-fresh-start> [accessed on 1 November 2018].

[171] 'National Museum of African American History and Culture', *Smithsonian* <https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/factsheets/national-museum-african-american-history-and-culture> [accessed on 17 October 2018].

CONCLUSION

The post-civil rights era occurred against a backdrop of cultural-political contentiousness that defined the turbulent decades of the 1960s and 1970s. Amid political assassinations, war, protest, and immense cultural and generational divisions, race continued to play a dominant role in public debate. Considering this through the lens of black power and black inclusion in popular culture reveals the complicated dynamics of race relations in the last third of the 20th century. Representing these complexities can create challenges for curators, who also have to consider issues of authenticity and struggles between entertainment and education. Despite these challenges, the societal parallels between the post-civil rights years and our current era offer opportunities for displays to educate visitors not only about the historical narrative of the 1960s and 1970s, but, perhaps just as importantly, about how lessons from this period can help Americans navigate present divisions.

CONCLUSION

The era of civil rights is one of the most familiar periods of American history; however, despite its familiarity, the popular understanding of the era is clouded by myths and, as a result, museums face several challenges when representing the period. As in all historical representation, education/entertainment and accuracy/authenticity are significant factors in museum analyses of civil rights displays. The museums in this study have largely crafted displays that are educational and authentic, but popular versions of this period can sometimes be detected in these institutions. There can be a tendency to focus on the more extreme aspects of the era—for example, lynching and violence are more prominent in these displays than something less tangible, like the psychological impact of segregation.

This is most true in relation to displays representing segregationists, who are often depicted only in their most extreme forms in museums. The omission is similar to the absence of 19th century apologist thought and creates a void in which visitors do not learn about what exactly African Americans were fighting against in these respective periods. The disproportionate nature of segregationist representation is just one example of this pattern, a microcosm of the tendency to zoom in on the most extreme aspects of historical narratives. As such, these displays result in narratives that are accurate but not always authentic, entertaining but not always educational.

At times, displays present authentic narratives that embrace complexity, communicating diversity of thought and proportionate history. This occurs, for example, in the BCRI's door and window display, in which visitors listen to various African-American attitudes toward civil rights organization and activism. These types of displays succeed in entertaining visitors while educating them about the nuances of the past, dispelling misconceptions, and challenging homogenized views of history.

The primary distinction between the history discussed in this chapter and narratives representing the more distant past is its temporal closeness. Whereas slavery and Civil War narratives are taught through education or oral history, there are still many people living who witnessed segregation, civil rights activism, black power, and post-civil rights popular culture. Whether they personally marched for equal rights or watched the events unfold from a distance, civil rights and post-civil rights museum displays seem to bring these people back to an era defined simultaneously by hatred and hope.

This is evident in visitor feedback—particularly referencing the BCRI, as this institution is entirely dedicated to the era. These visitors write: 'I was young during the marches…this place gave me the opportunity to learn more about the Civil Rights Movement that was not taught in school, especially in the segregated schools that I attended'; 'I had resisted visiting this museum because I knew it would revive some very painful memories.'; 'Having lived through the tumultuous civil rights era of the 60's, seeing it re-enacted brought back memories of one of America's most difficult periods.'[172] These displays also have the ability to educate white visitors about the harsh reality of segregation and racism: 'I am a 45-year-old white man. I learned things today that shook me, things I will never forget.'[173] Thus, for many visitors museum displays do not represent a distant, exotic past, but rather a familiar memory that continues to impact their lives decades later.

[172] *TripAdvisor* (29 September 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r314936121-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 4 March 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (1 April 2014) <https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r199563340-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 4 March 2016]; *TripAdvisor* (26 September 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r422287417-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 13 September 2017].

[173] *TripAdvisor* (21 October 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r430437691-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 2 December 2016].

These direct connections make displays representing the long civil rights movement personal, as visitors bring their own set of experiences and expectations to their museum visits. This closeness offers museums the opportunity to powerfully connect with visitors in a way that is not possible when representing more distant histories. On the other hand, these personal connections can also prove challenging for curators, as there is a significant disparity between history and memory of the period. While academics have spent decades broadening narratives to incorporate previously-unacknowledged elements like grassroots efforts, local leaders, and women, the civil rights era of popular memory focuses on a singular national movement led by a few great men. The challenge of reconciling these two versions of the era indicates broader challenges that can arise when history and heritage conflict.

This disparity also results in a consideration of authenticity in civil rights representation. In the traditional conceptualization of authenticity, this would be an appropriate place to discuss the subjectivity of authenticity—in short, authenticity is difficult to define because it is endlessly subjective and, as a result, scholars may find that both the history of academics and the memory of visitors are both valid, as authenticity may be considered a personalized perspective of the past. This thesis, however, aligns authenticity with the version of the past produced in academia; moreover, this thesis considers authenticity as a concept that is distinct from accuracy—more a case of historical proportionality than historical truth. As a result, this chapter argues that civil rights displays are most effective when they embrace the aspects of popular memory that are historically accurate (in order to craft recognizable narratives), challenge the aspects that are not (in order to offer new learning opportunities), and present an authentic narrative that balances entertainment with education, the spectacular with the mundane, and the famous with the ordinary.

The last point of this argument—the importance of balancing the famous with the ordinary—was a prominent aspect of this chapter's examination of long civil rights representation. The civil rights and post-civil rights eras produced famous figures who became household names due to their leadership, activism, or their relevance in popular culture. These names reign supreme in popular memory and, as such, museum displays representing these eras may prioritize their stories over those of the non-famous. With a few exceptions, however, the museums in this study embrace ordinary people and experiences. Representing famous figures is certainly important—these recognizable names continue to inspire people today, whether in areas of activism, political leadership, sports, or the arts. However, it is equally important to incorporate the 'unsung heroes' of history (as one BCRI visitor calls them), in order to highlight the experiences of ordinary people and the ways that they contributed to societal change.[174]

This is a particularly important message to convey amid the current cultural-political backdrop of American society. As previously noted, the parallels between the long civil rights movement and the present are numerous. The turbulence that rocked this historical period—especially the late 1960s and 1970s—stems from the same divisions that tarnish the current public discourse. Disagreements concerning race, gender, class, political ideology, and generational gaps (among many other things) connect our modern world to the historical narratives discussed in this chapter. Though problems have slightly changed, modern debates over police brutality, guns, and political tribalism mirror historical debates over segregation, war, and racially-based political realignment in the 20th century.

For these reasons, museological representations of the long civil rights movement can offer more than historical education; they can offer blueprints—guides for navigating analogous scenarios in our modern world. Considering these broader comparisons, the

[174] *TripAdvisor* (16 December 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r333380212-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 20 August 2016].

museological representation of these eras has greater potential than that of less proximate historical narratives. The museums in this study—as of my visits in 2016 and 2017—do not explicitly make these connections. While it is possible that visitors may understand this relevancy without the museums' assistance, highlighting the ways that current generations can apply historical lessons to modern societal issues would encourage visitors to understand the important relationship between the past and present. Equipping visitors with these tools for dealing with modern racial, political, and cultural struggles, then, could serve as a new frontier for museums that choose to not only educate about history, but also to inspire visitors to move society forward into new eras and new possibilities.

Conclusion

'And yes, a clear-eyed view of history can make us uncomfortable, and shake us out of familiar narratives. But it is precisely because of that discomfort that we learn and grow and harness our collective power to make this nation more perfect.'—President Barack Obama

History museums float between the two mediums of history and heritage, considered simultaneously as representations of historical truths and touristic entertainment. This begs the question: are these institutions sites of history or sites of heritage? How one answers this question will determine what they envision an 'effective' history museum to be. This thesis argues that history museums are distinct from more traditional heritage sites; with a different background and purpose, history museums are most effective when they are directed not by popular memory or current political attitudes, but rather by a commitment to historical authenticity.

Over the last three decades there have been concerns about increasingly blurred lines between education and entertainment. As Juanita Moore, former director of the National Civil Rights Museum, explains:

> *[Museums have become more interactive] because museums have to compete with the Disneylands and movies and theaters that play for the public's attention. Museums therefore have to make things a lot more accessible and a lot more relevant…so that people will come in and view it. If there is nothing in there for them, they won't come.*[1]

Many scholars have been critical of the increased incorporation of entertainment in museums, as outlined in the introductory chapter. Similarly, criticisms of these methods appear in some formal reviews of museums, wherein critics voice concern about the loss of traditional methods in museum displays.[2] With these concerns in mind, this thesis argues

[1] Michael Honey and Juanita Moore, 'Doing Public History at the National Civil Rights Museum: A Conversation with Juanita Moore', *The Public Historian* 17.1 (1995), pp. 70-84; p. 75.

[2] For example, in his review of the NMAAHC *The Washington Post*'s Philip Kennicott explains why he feels the earlier galleries are 'bloodless' when compared to later galleries: 'That is largely because this museum, like most well-funded museums that aim at a popular audience today, is so dependent on multimedia that it can't help but slight history before the age of film and recorded sound….[The museum] clearly wanted exactly what it got: an immersive experience aimed at the cellphone-video-iPad generation.' In his own review, Vann R. Newkirk II responds to Kennicott's concern, writing that 'these are necessary features, rather than shortcomings of the museum….The mission of the exhibits seems not to always be to "clarify and teach," as Kennicott hopes, but to impress upon viewers just how much they don't know, and how deeply the grand conspiracy of white supremacy runs. That explains the emphasis on media-heavy exhibits for episodes nearer the present: So much black history has been systematically destroyed and denied chronicle by that conspiracy, that the curators emphasize its richness where they can.' See: Philip Kennicott, 'The African American Museum tells powerful stories—but not as powerfully as it could', *The Washington*

that education and entertainment are not mutually exclusive, and that museums can combine these two elements in order to attract, educate, entertain, and challenge visitors. In contrast to the concerns raised in more formal museum analyses, the public feedback to the museums in this study frequently cites the more entertaining elements of museums, often noting how these methods helped them (or their children) better engage with the information provided.[3] This demonstrates that, though education should not be sacrificed for greater entertainment, museums that can educate in an entertaining way may maximise visitor experience, learning, and satisfaction.

What should not be compromised, however, is authenticity. When narratives lack authenticity, the spectacular and extreme disproportionately dominate narratives, marginalizing mundane experiences and ordinary people. Museums that balance the spectacular with the mundane and the experiences of key figures with those of ordinary people can entertain visitors while also providing proportionate historical insight without

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Post (14 September 2016) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/the-african-american-museum-tells-powerful-stories--but-in-a-disjointed-way/2016/09/14/b7ba7e4c-7849-11e6-bd86-b7bbd53d2b5d_story.html?utm_term=.8ba59012d5ec> [accessed on 20 September 2016]; Vann R. Newkirk II, 'How a Museum Reckons With Black Pain', *The Atlantic* (23 September 2016) <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/09/national-museum-of-african-american-history-and-culture-smithsonian/501356/> [accessed on 27 September 2016].

[3] This was a particularly frequent theme in reviews for the BCRI. Some reviews read: 'Very moving exhibits—audio, visual and physical exhibits. It puts you in the scene of what folks did and how dedicated they were to accomplish[ing] equal rights under the law.'; 'It is often difficult to find something that all three of our children (ages 16 to 8) enjoy. The exhibits were very engaging and our children seemed to genuinely like and enjoy everything the museum had to offer. In addition to traditional museum exhibits, it offered periodic video and audio clips which helped our kids make connections to real people, children included, during such an impactful time.'; 'The exhibits were great and the multi-sensory experiences really made our visit special.'; 'They do a really nice job of mixing the visual…with powerful audio and explanatory text. There is a variety of information, and ways of presenting that information, which should suit different kinds of visitors.'; 'I'm not one who usually enjoys museums because I find the signs have too much written on them so it's hard to read and learn. The Institute defies all of [this]!' See: *TripAdvisor* (20 January 2017) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r453539150-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 18 June 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (30 December 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r447857499-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed 18 June 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (9 July 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r390702591-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 18 June 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (5 January 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r337639435-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 18 June 2017]; *TripAdvisor* (16 June 2015) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r280600373-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 18 June 2017].

exaggeration or sensationalism.[4] When this balance is achieved, museums may present less recognizable events, experiences, and people alongside their more recognizable counterparts.[5] This process produces powerful narratives that mix the familiar with the unfamiliar in an intellectually-stimulating manner.

Authentic narratives also embrace history's nuances and complexities. While oversimplifying or homogenizing historical narratives can create more palatable displays, it is important that museums provide authentically complex accounts of history. This may produce museological displays that conflict with personal or collective memories, or it could contribute to narratives that are not popular against modern cultural-political backdrops. Despite this, just as it is important to prioritize authenticity over accuracy, it is also beneficial for museum visitors to learn about nuanced history and the diversity of ideas. Of course, museums should not be expected to examine every point of complexity or every counter argument relating to a topic; they should, however, avoid perpetuating the types of historical myths that stem from over-simplification or homogenization and, where possible, seek to clarify these misunderstandings.

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[4] See pages 40-47 for more information about the scholarly debate over whether people seek authentic experiences in heritage sites.

[5] Representing famous figures is not inherently problematic—in fact, these figures can inspire visitors in a unique way. For example, Andrea Burns writes about 17-year-old Brandon Smith, a student of Chicago City College who was unexpectedly inspired by figures represented in the DuSable Museum's library. In a December 1970 newsletter, Smith recalls: 'I've never been impoverished or on the brink of starvation, but anyone who lacks the self-respect, love of his people, and ambition to improve himself as I did is extremely destitute….My proud heritage meant nothing to me, because I was never told that I had a heritage, and that it was something to be proud of. Besides, why should I give a damn about Crispus Attucks, Frederick Douglass, Dr. Charles Drew, etc., because they were all dead and buried and didn't have anything to do with me. Anyway, they couldn't have been much because they were "Negroes", weren't they?' Smith later sought resources at the DuSable after becoming dissatisfied at the public library's black history materials. He discovered the magnitude of available sources at DuSable, where, he writes, 'I somehow became intrigued with the outstanding achievements of great Afro-Americans, past and present and I come to the Museum as often as I can. I've decided to enter the mainstream…of the movement directed to achieving equal rights for all American citizens.' Smith's story serves as a reminder that accessibility to information about famous African Americans can inspire younger generations. This thesis has remained aware of the importance of representing famous figures in museums, arguing that these stories should be tempered by ordinary experiences in order to present authentic, balanced narratives. See: Andrea A. Burns, *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), p. 77; cites Newsletter, DuSable Museum of African American History and Culture, December 1970, DuSable.

Authenticity can also be impacted by contemporary cultural or political climates that shape the way that histories are presented and how visitors receive these representations. This thesis argues that, though it is important to be aware of these forces, objectivity and authenticity should not be sacrificed in order to become more politically or culturally appealing.[6] Within this framework, it is important that black history museums reject false binary narratives that correlate good with black and bad with white. Instead, and in tandem with the previous argument, they are most effective when they embrace complexity, dissonance, and, when necessary, political inconvenience to present honest histories.[7] When this balance is achieved, presentism is set aside and displays can engage visitors with honest, authentic historical conversations.

Furthermore, it is important to consider museological omissions when analyzing authenticity in displays and narratives.[8] As argued throughout this thesis, observing what has been left out of these museums is just as important as observing what has been

[6] Of course, this curatorial objective has challenges. Presenting information that diverges from collective memory, conflicts with current cultural-political attitudes, or falls outside the worldview of visitors can produce contention between the visitor and his/her interpretation of displays. As Frans F. J. Schouten explains: 'If new information [presented in museums] fits with the cognitive structure of the visitors, it will be easily assimilated. But the more remote new information is from the cognitive structure, the more easily it will be rejected by visitors. If information does not correspond with the way we perceive the world, it will be neglected, changed, ignored or even not perceived at all.' Similarly, Gaynor Kavanagh notes that when visitors approach displays 'personal memories may be stirred by the images, objects or words made visible and may dominate over any "formal" history offered.' Thus, this thesis acknowledges these challenges facing curators—particularly amid such a politically-charged backdrop. See: Frans F. J. Schouten, 'Heritage as Historical Reality'. In David T. Herbert, *Heritage, Tourism and Society* (London and New York: Mansell, 1995), 21-31 (pp. 22-23); Gaynor Kavanagh, 'Making Histories, Making Memories'. In Gaynor Kavanagh (ed.), *Making Histories in Museums* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), 1-14 (p. 2).

[7] This argument contrasts with that of Emily Hertzman, David Anderson, and Susan Rowley, who write that edutainment heritage tourist attractions (EHTAs) should incorporate visitors' personal criteria to shape their displays. They explain: '[T]he degree to which visitors may critically evaluate historical representations at EHTAs using personal criteria for what constitutes suitable, accurate, culturally and politically appropriate characterizations of historical events can be of direct use to…similar institutions….Knowledge of the nature of visitors' subjective critical criteria may help institutions decide how they want to position their historical representations in ideological terms.' This thesis argues, however, that while it is important for museums to understand their visitors and the cultural-political attitudes that shape their expectations and experiences, that this information should not considerably alter historical narratives produced in these institutions. These two contrasting arguments also reflect the disparity between sites of heritage—which reflect modern influences and visitor interests—and sites of history—which strive to educate visitors even when it may be politically inconvenient or at odds with visitors' worldviews. See: Emily Hertzman, David Anderson, and Susan Rowley, 'Edutainment heritage tourist attractions: A portrait of visitors' experiences at Storyeum', *Museum Management and Curatorship* 23.2 (2008), 155-175 (p. 172).

[8] Urry lists 'the "other" who has been excluded from the exhibition' as one of the main subjects to consider in museum analyses. See: Urry, *Consuming Places*, p. 100.

included. This argument acknowledges the limitations of space, funding, and artifact availability; however, in deciding where to commit resources, a selective process takes place in which some elements of the past are favored over others. As Crew and Sims write:

> *[T]here is no ideal spot on the temporal continuum that inherently deserves emphasis….In elevating or admiring one piece of the past we tend to ignore and devalue others. One reality lives at the expense of countless others.*[9]

Moreover, this selection process is impacted by forces in society, politics, and culture. As Peter Vergo writes:

> *Beyond the captions, the information panels, the accompanying catalogue, the press handout, there is a subtext comprising innumerable diverse, often contradictory strands, woven from the wishes and ambitions, the intellectual or political or social or educational aspirations and preconceptions of the museum director, the curator, the scholar, the designer, the sponsor—to say nothing of the society, the political or social or educational system which nurtured all these people and in so doing left its stamp upon them.*[10]

Thus, it is disingenuous to depict the curatorial process as an entirely objective one. Instead, what is presented is not the purest form of history, but rather a reconstruction of some elements of history, all of which are shaped by broader societal forces.

This selection process—whether impacted by limited resources or by unavoidable biases—results in narratives that prioritize some elements of history over others. While museums cannot be expected to include every historical detail, this thesis argues that some omissions seem to serve the purpose of maintaining a specific museological narrative. Whether certain topics are omitted to remain politically palatable, evoke emotional

[9] Spencer R. Crew and James E. Sims, 'Locating Authenticity: Fragments of a Dialogue'. In Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (eds), *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of a Museum Display* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1991), 159-175 (p. 160).
[10] Peter Vergo, 'Introduction'. In Peter Vergo (ed.), *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion Books, 1989), 1-5 (p. 3).

responses from visitors, or avoid contentiousness that may endanger funding sources, these gaps alter museum narratives within these institutions.

In addition to examining issues stemming from tensions that can arise between education and entertainment, authenticity and accuracy, and history and memory, this thesis has also considered the relationship between black history museums and place. Place plays a significant role within museum narratives and, as such, situating each institution within its broader geo-cultural framework provides insight into this dynamic. The methods of localization and internationalization have been used to great effect in displays analyzed in this thesis. Localizing black history narratives can help to transform sites of tragedy and can collectively heal historical wounds. Moreover, a local lens provides an opportunity for curators to connect narratives to surrounding commemorative landscapes in order to foster conversations about history, place, and memorialization. While localization is key for black history museums that are positioned in places of significance within the black history narrative (and they almost always are), internationalized displays teach visitors about the transatlantic nature of African-American history. Even if the majority of the museum narrative in a specific museum focuses on local, regional, or national black history, it is beneficial to include some information about the global links between diasporic and continental Africans. In this way, visitors are encouraged to think about both local and international histories and, perhaps more importantly, the intersecting points of those narratives.

In his chapter in *Museums, Society, Inequality*, Richard Sandell asks whether 'different kinds of museum and different modes of display are more authoritative, better positioned to influence and shape attitudes, more powerful agents of change than others'.[11] This thesis argues that black history museums are uniquely positioned to shape attitudes

[11] Richard Sandell, 'Museums and the Combating of Social Inequality: Roles, Responsibilities, Resistance'. In Richard Sandell (ed.), *Museums, Society, Inequality* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 3-23 (p. 12).

and promote change. When museums give a voice and affirmation to marginalized groups of people, these institutions have the ability to greatly impact the group's collective psyche. Museums representing histories of those commonly included in the traditional historical narrative can still inspire, provoke, and impact; however, it is the museum of the 'other' that can instill a deep sense of pride and confidence in those who may lack these introspective qualities due to centuries of societal devaluing.

Black history museums are special, multipurpose institutions with a unique past themselves. They were developed to fill an educational void, teaching visitors about an important aspect of history that had long been whitewashed from mainstream narratives. In addition to these normal museum functions, they also had to nurture, empower, and connect to local communities in a way that became a defining characteristic of these institutions, while also correcting historical inaccuracies engrained into collective memory through black stereotypes in popular culture. Today, they continue to spread a message of education and empowerment. As one BCRI visitor writes: 'This should be a mandatory visit for all Americans.'[12] Sadly, as another points out: 'The people who should see this exhibit won't be going.'[13] So goes the difficult relationship between racial history and current race relations—sometimes the people who need to learn that history the most have no intention of engaging with it. Despite this, the beauty of knowledge is that it is everlasting. When people afflicted with prejudice and historical misunderstanding are ready to learn, black history museums are well positioned to welcome them inside, educate them, and help them move forward from a painful past.

[12] *TripAdvisor* (16 October 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r428545585-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed on 16 January 2017].
[13] *TripAdvisor* (24 April 2016) <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g30375-d106398-r366979487-Birmingham_Civil_Rights_Institute-Birmingham_Alabama.html#REVIEWS> [accessed on 16 January 2017].

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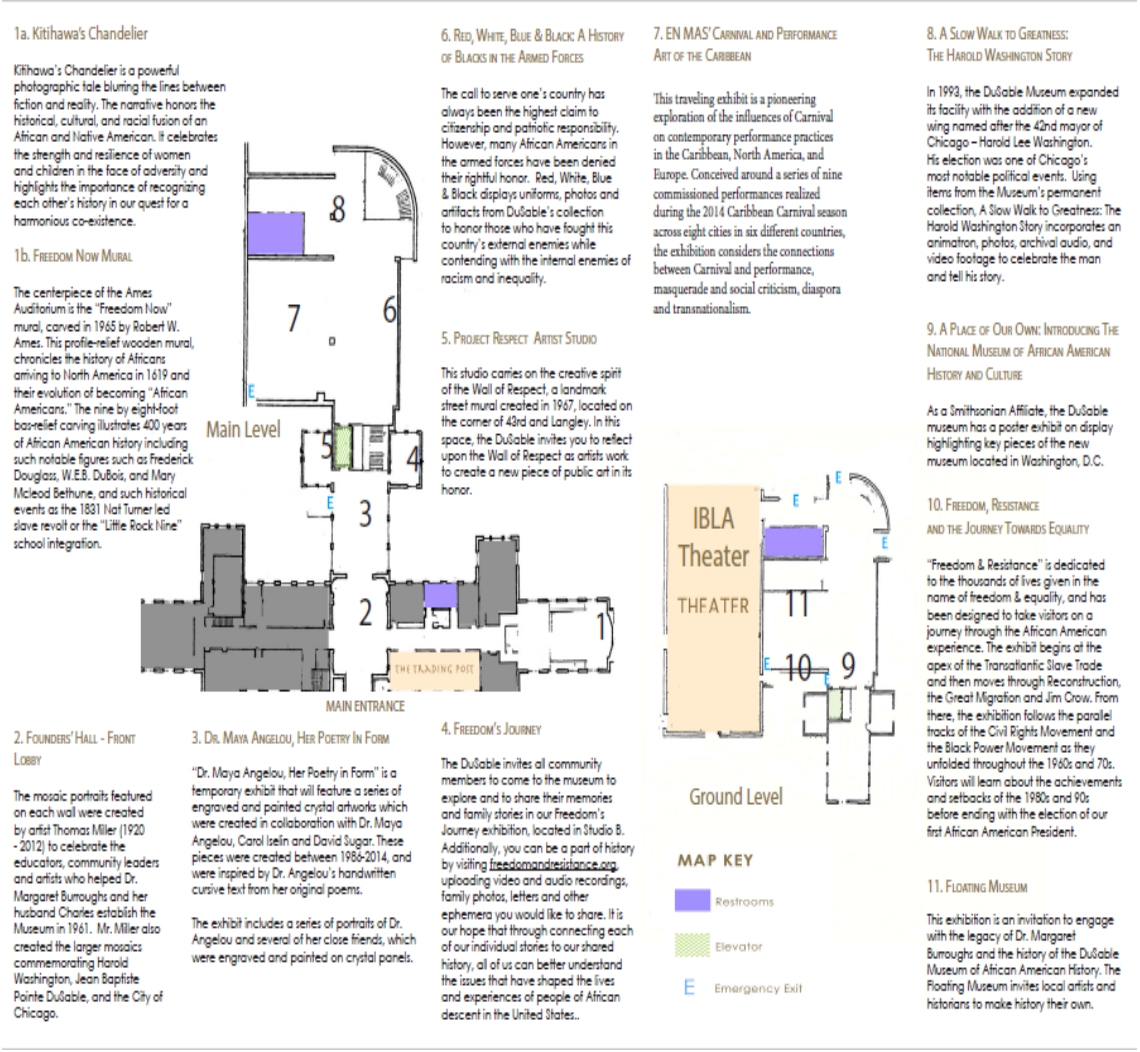
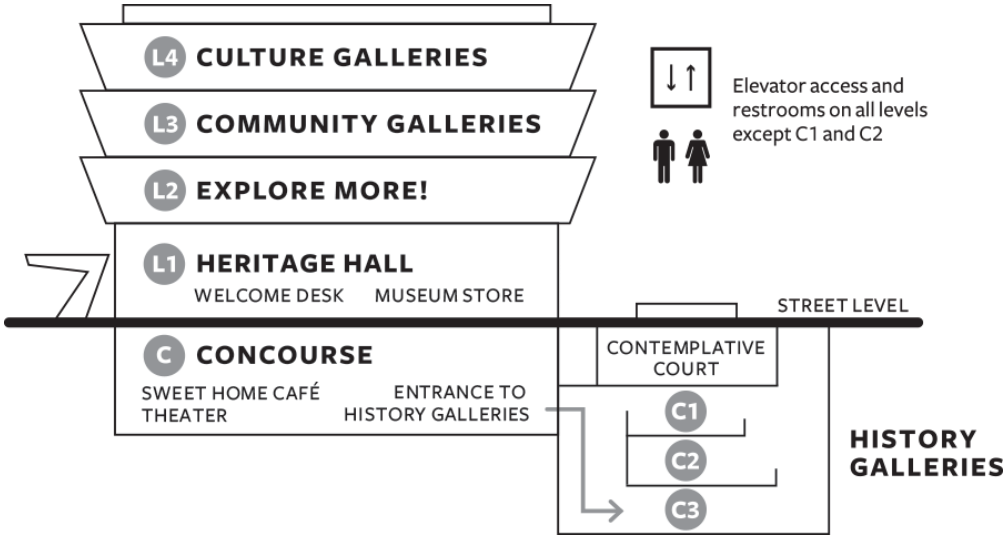
Appendix 1: Museum Floor Plans

A. DuSable Museum of African American History (Chicago, Illinois)

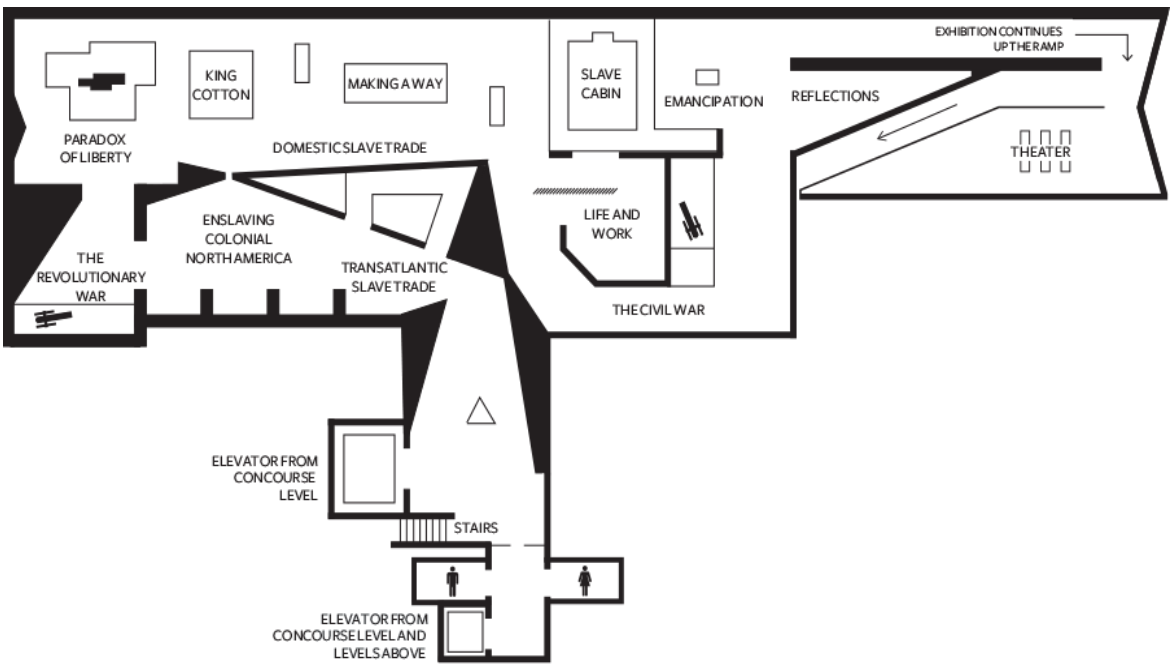


B. Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (Birmingham, Alabama)

C. National Museum of African American History and Culture, (Washington, D.C.)

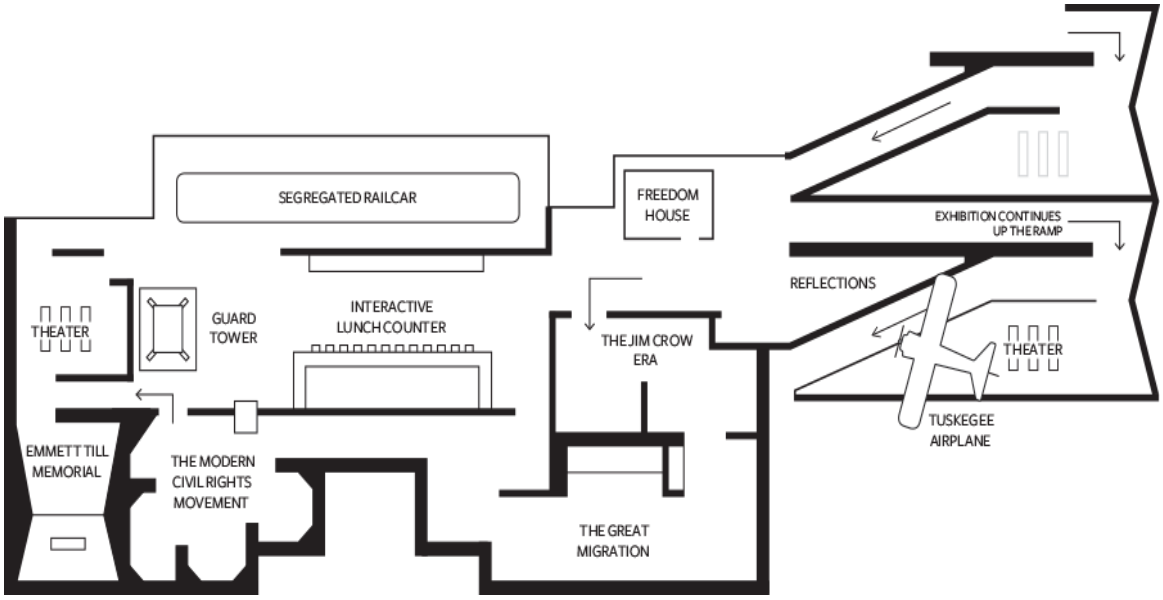


C3 SLAVERY AND FREEDOM 1400-1877



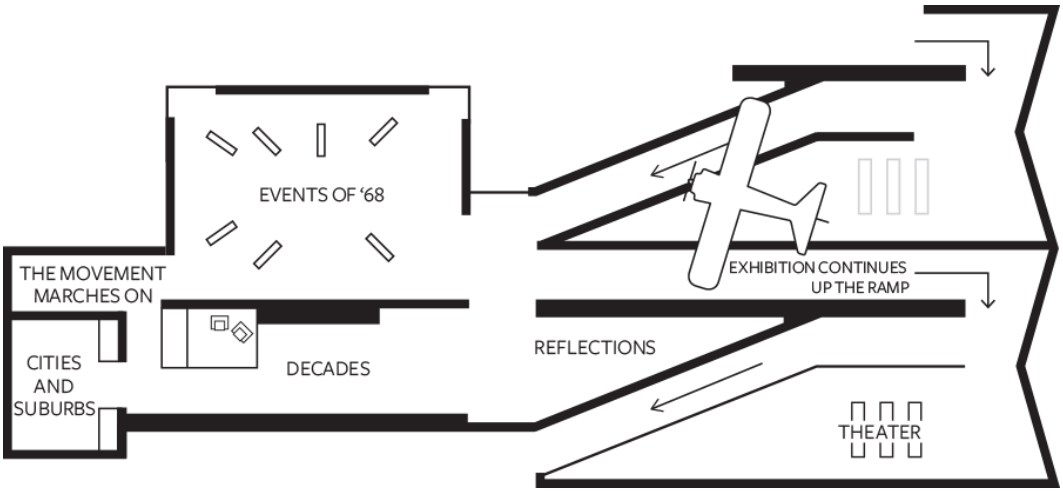
C2

DEFENDING FREEDOM, DEFINING FREEDOM: THE ERA OF SEGREGATION 1876-1968

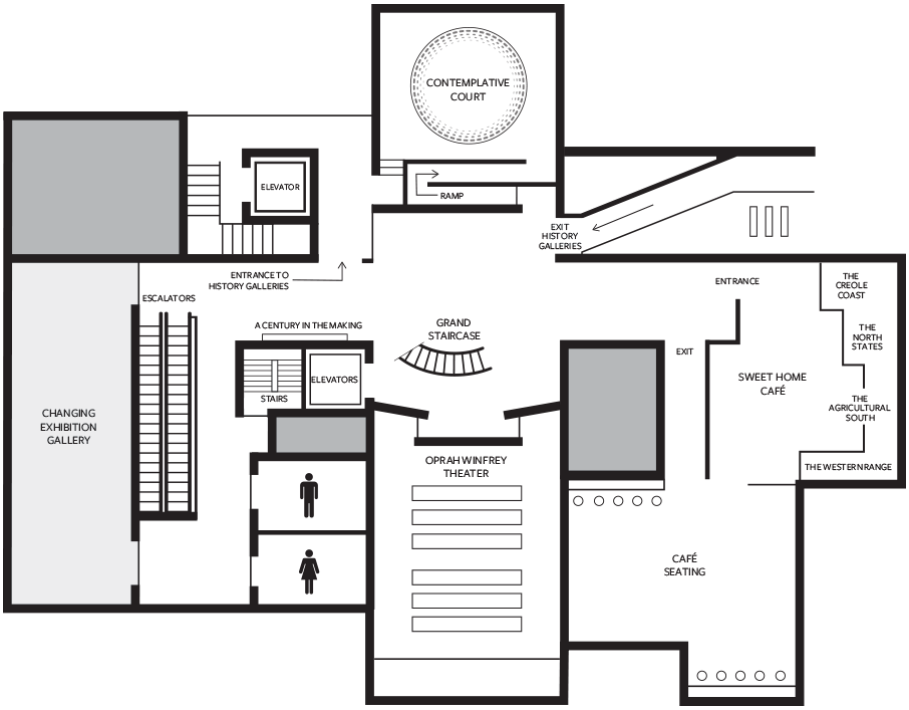


C1

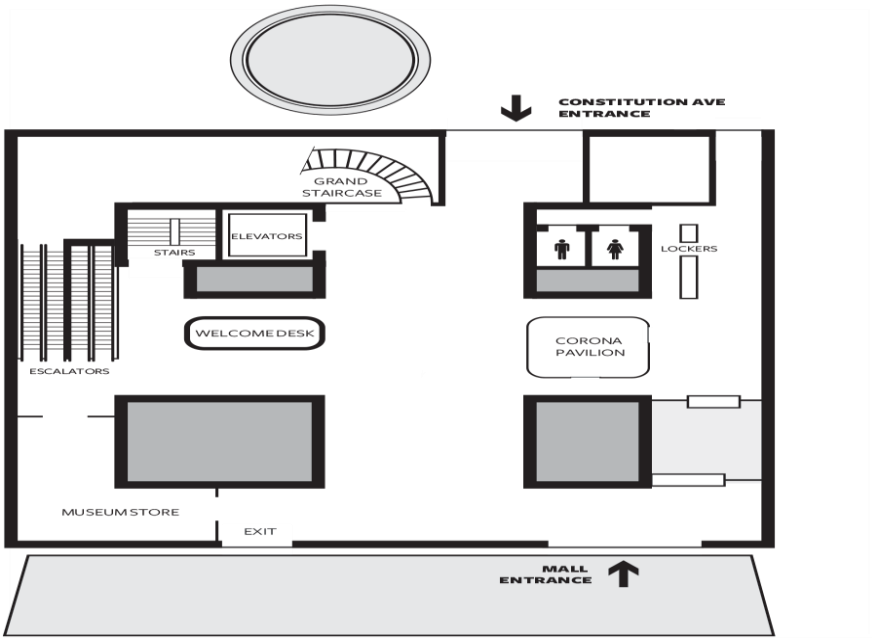
A CHANGING AMERICA: 1968 AND BEYOND



C CONCOURSE

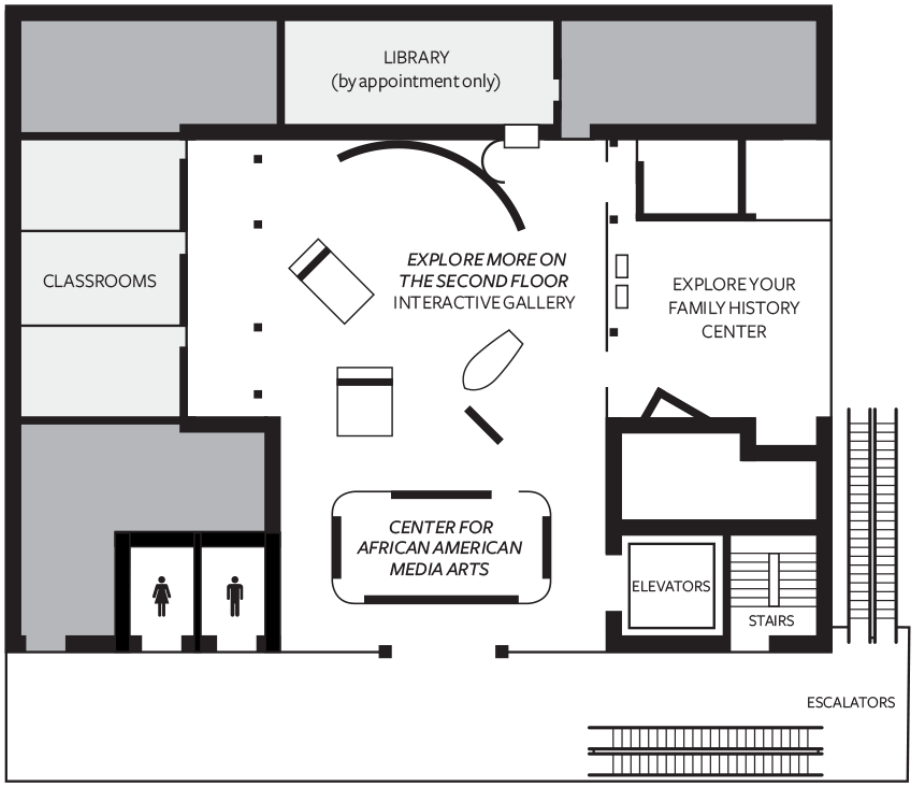


L1 ENTRANCE LEVEL



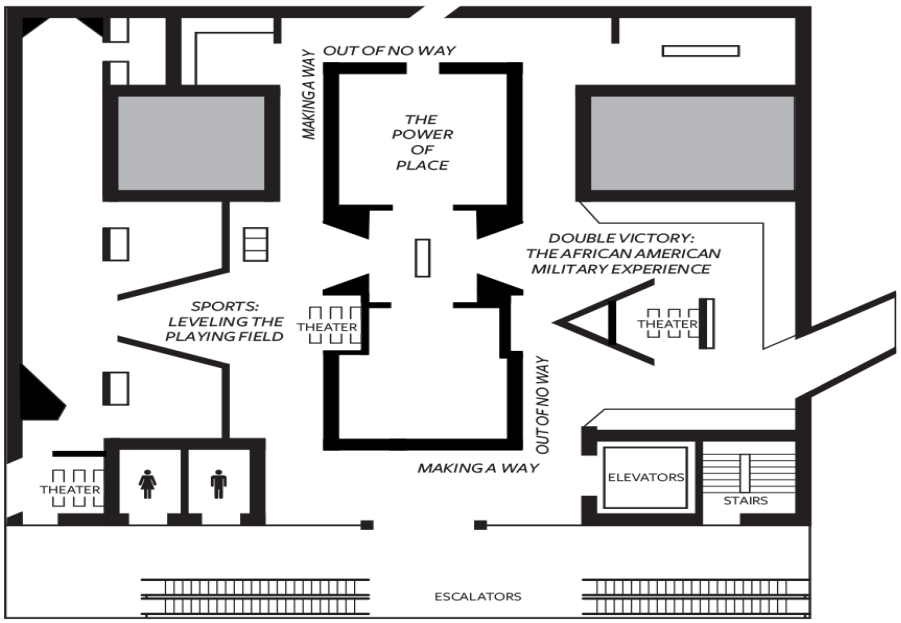
L2

EXPLORE MORE



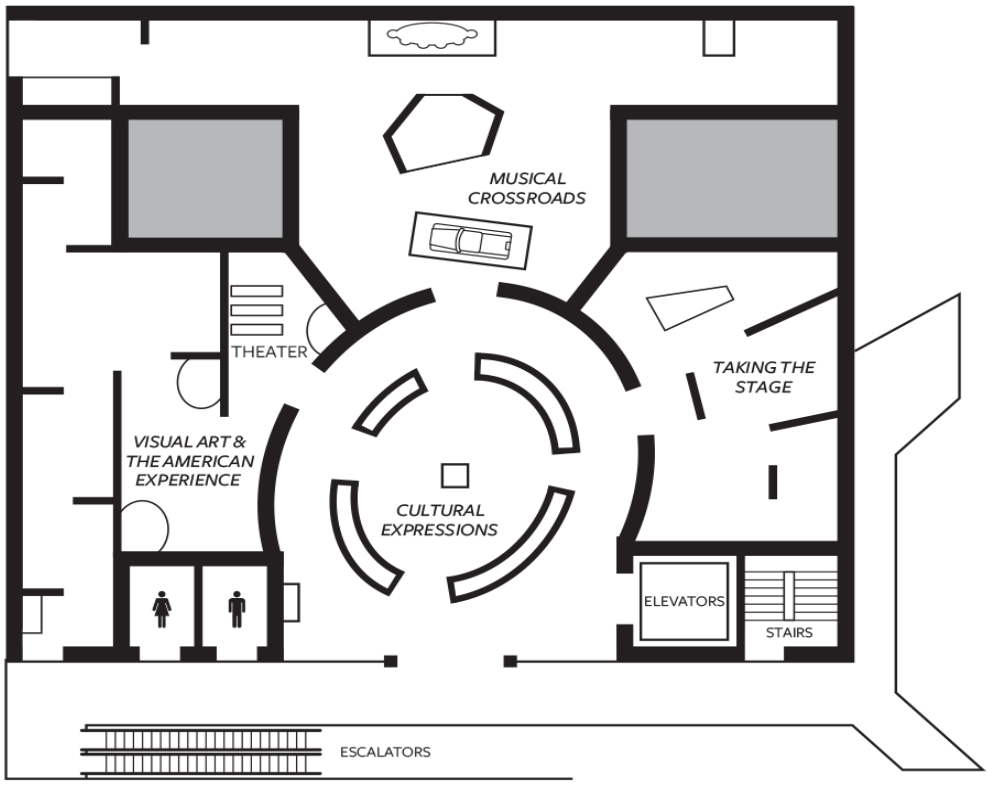
L3

COMMUNITY GALLERIES

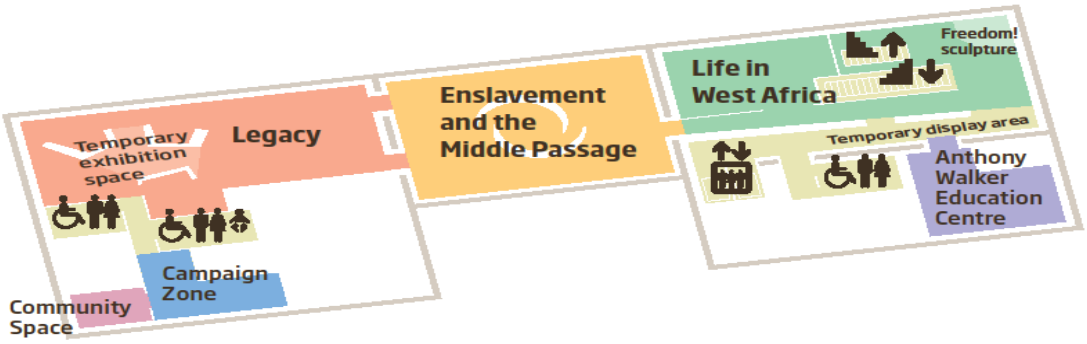


L4

CULTURE GALLERIES



D. International Slavery Museum (Liverpool, England)



Appendix 2: Museum Mission Statements

The DuSable Museum: http://www.dusablemuseum.org/about-the-museum/

'To promote understanding and inspire appreciation of the achievements, contributions, and experiences of African Americans through exhibits, programs, and activities that illustrate African and African American history, culture and art.'

The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute: http://www.bcri.org/information/aboutbcri.html

'To enlighten each generation about civil and human rights by exploring our common past and working together in the present to build a better future.'

The National Museum of African American History and Culture:
https://nmaahc.si.edu/about/museum

There are four pillars upon which the NMAAHC stands:

1. It provides an opportunity for those who are interested in African American culture to explore and revel in this history through interactive exhibitions
2. It helps all Americans see how their stories, their histories, and their cultures are shaped and informed by global influences
3. It explores what it means to be an American and share how American values like resiliency, optimism, and spirituality are reflected in African American history and culture
4. It serves as a place of collaboration that reaches beyond Washington, D.C. to engage new audiences and to work with the myriad of museums and educational institutions that have explored and preserved this important history well before this museum was created

The International Slavery Museum: (in progress and not currently online)

The International Slavery Museum increases the understanding of transatlantic and chattel slavery and their enduring impact and legacies through our collections, public engagement and research. We also explore other forms of slavery and enslavement and are a campaigning museum that actively engages with current human rights issues. We address ignorance and challenge intolerance and build partnerships with museums, communities and human rights organisations that share our vision.

Appendix 3: Photograph Annotations

Museum Backgrounds

Jacqueline Smith protesting—Harry Low, 'The woman still protesting over Martin Luther King', *BBC* (13 April 2018) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-43562269>

Jacqueline Smith tarp—Personal collection

'306' shot glasses—Personal collection

The DuSable Museum of African American History in Chicago, Illinois—Personal collection

The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute in Birmingham, Alabama—'Must-See Museums in Birmingham', *Limbaugh Toyota* (16 August 2016) <http://news.limbaughtoyota.com/must-see-museums-in-birmingham/>

Police dog statue, Kelly Ingram Park—Personal collection

Water hose statue, Kelly Ingram Park—Personal collection

The National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.—Personal collection

Dedication ceremony—'National Museum of African American History Opens Its Doors', *NPR* (24 September 2016) <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/09/24/495302034/national-museum-of-african-american-history-opens-its-doors>

The International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, England—'Your visit', *National Museums Liverpool* <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime/visit/>

Representations of Slavery and the Civil War

The replication of an Igbo family compound, ISM—Personal collection

West African display, NMAAHC—Personal collection

Slave trade wall, NMAAHC—Personal collection

Slave trade display, DuSable Museum—Personal collection

The ship-like entrance of 'Freedom and Resistance'—Personal collection

Liverpool street name display, ISM—Personal collection

Slave register, ISM—Personal collection

Items used to restrain and punish, ISM—Personal collection

St Kitts plantation replica, ISM—Personal collection

Point of Pines cabin, NMAAHC—Personal collection

A petition for freedom, NMAAHC—Personal collection

Children of the Amistad statue, DuSable Museum—Personal collection

Underground Railroad display, ISM—Personal collection

'Paradox of Liberty' display, NMAAHC—Personal collection

The North Star, NMAAHC—Personal collection

David Hoyt's map, NMAAHC—Personal collection

'Marketing the Movement' display, NMAAHC—Personal collection

Abolitionist display, ISM—Personal collection

Sibley tent used in tent cities, NMAAHC—Personal collection

Representations of the Long Civil Rights Era

White classroom replica, BCRI—Personal collection

Black classroom replica, BCRI—Personal collection

1950s diner replica, BCRI—Personal collection

Courtroom display, BCRI—Personal collection

Close-up image of the courtroom display, BCRI—Personal collection

Names of lynching victims, NMAAHC—Personal collection

Hanging tree postcard, DuSable Museum—Personal collection

Confrontation Gallery, BCRI—Personal collection

Figures in the *Confrontation Gallery*, BCRI—Personal collection

Inside the barbershop, BCRI—Personal collection

Inside the church, BCRI—Personal collection

Black collectibles, DuSable Museum—Personal collection

Black collectibles, NMAAHC—Personal collection

Black stereotype and minstrel display, BCRI—Personal collection

Black stereotype and minstrel display, ISM—Personal collection

The 'Fight for Freedom and Equality' display, ISM—Personal collection

Sit-in movement display, DuSable Museum—Personal collection

Lunch counter display, NMAAHC—Personal collection

Interactive screens, NMAAHC—Personal collection

Forrest & Sons, BCRI—Personal collection

Percy's Place, BCRI—Personal collection

Dr. King bust, DuSable Museum—Personal collection

1964 Illinois rally flyer, DuSable Museum—Personal collection

Dr. King's jail cell replica, BCRI—Personal collection

Alabama newspapers, BCRI—Personal collection

Eugene 'Bull' Connor's tank, BCRI—Personal collection

Sitting area, ISM—Personal collection

Modern global issues display, ISM—Personal collection

Rosa Parks statue, BCRI—Personal collection

Under-acknowledged women display, BCRI—Personal collection

The 'Black Achievers Wall', ISM—Personal collection

Graffiti display, BCRI—Personal collection

Digital newspaper display, BCRI—Personal collection

Contemporary photo of burned bus near Anniston—'Freedom Riders ambushed: Vintage photos of Alabama's headlines on May 15, 1961', *AL.com* (15 May 2015) <http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2015/05/freedom_riders_ambushed_vintag.html>

Burned bus replica, BCRI—Personal collection

Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing display, BCRI—Personal collection

'Foundations of Black Power' display, NMAAHC—Personal collection

Justice for Fred Hampton poster, DuSable Museum—Personal collection

Free breakfast sign, DuSable Museum—Personal collection

Baseball display, NMAAHC—Personal collection

Jackie Robinson statue, NMAAHC—Personal collection

Oprah Winfrey display, NMAAHC—Personal collection

Appendix 4: African-American Historical Sites Directory

Below is a list of American-based African-American historical sites that may be of interest to the reader. The existence of these institutions, as well as their contact information, may change; however, I have provided the most up-to-date information as of August 2018.

MUSEUM	PLACE	WEBSITE[14]
African American Civil War Memorial and Museum	Washington, D.C.	https://www.afroamcivilwar.org/
African American Cultural and Genealogical Society of Illinois, Inc., Museum	Decatur, IL	http://www.african-americancultural.org/
African American Diversity Cultural Center (Also known as the Obama Hawaiian Africana Museum)	Honolulu, HI	https://aadcch.org/
African American Firefighter Museum	Los Angeles, CA	https://www.aaffmuseum.org/
African American Museum	Dallas, TX	http://www.aamdallas.org/
African American Museum and Library at Oakland	Oakland, CA	http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/locations/african-american-museum-library-oakland
African American Museum in Philadelphia	Philadelphia, PA	http://www.aampmuseum.org
African American Museum of Iowa	Cedar Rapids, IA	http://www.blackiowa.org
African American Museum of Nassau County	Hempstead, NY	https://theaamuseum.org/
African American Museum of Southern Illinois	Carbondale, IL	https://www.enjoyillinois.com/explore/listing/the-african-american-museum-of-southern-illinois
African American Museum of the Arts	DeLand, FL	http://www.africanmuseumdeland.org
African-American Panoramic Experience Museum	Atlanta, GA	http://www.apexmuseum.org

[14] The institution's official website is included where one exists; when the institution does not have an official website, I have included an unofficial alternative (usually a state or city tourism website).

African-American Research Library and Cultural Center	Fort Lauderdale, FL	http://www.broward.org/Library/ LocationsHours/Branches/Pages/AA/aspx
Afro-American Cultural and Historical Society Museum	East Cleveland, OH	http://www.eastclevelandpubliclibrary. Org/about-icabod-flewellen
Alexandria Black History Museum	Alexandria, VA	https://www.alexandriava.gov/BlackHistory
America's Black Holocaust Museum	Milwaukee, WI	http://abhmuseum.org/
American Jazz Museum	Kansas City, MO	https://www.americanjazzmuseum.org
Amistad Center for Art and Culture	Hartford, CT	http://www.amistadcenter.org
Amistad Research Center	New Orleans, LA	http://www.amisteadresearchcenter.org
Anacostia Community Museum	Washington, D.C.	http://anacostia.si.edu/
Andrew Jackson's Hermitage	Nashville, TN	http://www.thehermitage.com
Anne Spencer House and Garden Museum	Lynchburg, VA	http://www.annespencermuseum.com/index.php
Arna Bontemps African American Museum	Alexandria, LA	http://www.arnabontempsmuseum.com/
Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History	Atlanta, GA	http://www.afpls.org/aarl
August Wilson Center-African American Cultural Center	Pittsburgh, PN	https://aacc-awc.org/
Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture	Charleston, SC	http://avery.cofc.edu
Banneker-Douglass Museum	Annapolis, MD	http://bdmuseum.mayland.gov
Bertha Lee Strickland Cultural Museum	Seneca, SC	https://www.blscm.org
Bessie Smith Cultural Center	Chattanooga, TN	http://www.bessiesmithcc.org
Beulah Rucker Museum	Gainesville, FL	http://www.beulahruckermuseum.org
Birmingham Civil Rights Institute	Birmingham, AL	http://www.bcri.org

Black American West Museum	Denver, CO	https://bawmhc.org/
Black Archives	Miami, FL	http://www.theblackarchives.org
Black History 101 Mobile Museum	N/A	https://www.blackhistorymobilemuseum.com/
Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia	Richmond, VA	http://blackhistorymuseum.org/
Blanchard House Museum of African American History and Culture	Punta Gorda, FL	http://www.blanchardhousemuseum.org
Blues Hall of Fame	Memphis, TN	http://www.blues.org
Brazos Valley African American Museum	Bryan, TX	http://www.bvaam.org/
Bronzeville Children's Museum	Evergreen Park, IL	http://www.bronzevillechildrensmuseum.com/
Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site	Topeka, KS	https://www.nps.gov/brvb/index.htm
Buffalo Soldiers National Museum	Houston, TX	http://www.buffalosoldiermuseum.com
California African American Museum	Los Angeles, CA	https://caamuseum.org/
Carrie Meek – James Eaton Black Archives and Museum	Tallahassee, FL	http:www.famu/edu/index.cfm?MEBA
Casa del Rey Moro African Museum	San Diego, CA	http://www.africanmuseumsandiego.com/
Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History	Detroit, MI	https://www.thewright.org
Charlotte Hawkins Brown State Historic Site	Sedalia, NC	http://www.nchistoricsites.org/chb
Clarence L. Barney Jr. African American Cultural Center	Baton Rouge, LA	https://www.lsu.edu/diversity/aacc/
Clemson Area African American Museum	Clemson, SC	http://ca-aam.org/
Cleveland African American Museum	Cleveland, OH	http://aamcleveland.wixsite.com/aamc
Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park	Allensworth, CA	http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=583
Community Folk Art Center	Syracuse, NY	http://www.communityfolkartcenter.org

David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the Visual Arts and Culture of African Americans and the African Diaspora	College Park, MD	http://www.driskellcenter.umd.edu
Delta Arts Center	Winston-Salem, NC	http://www.deltaartscenter.org
Delta Blues Museum	Clarksdale, MS	http://www.deltamuseum.org
Delta Center for Culture and Learning	Cleveland, MS	http://www.deltacenterdsu.com
Delta Cultural Center	Helena, AR	http://www.deltaculturalcenter.com/
Discovering Amistad	New Haven, CT	https://discoveringamistad.org/
Dora Nelson African American Art and History Museum	Perris, CA	http://www.dnaaahm.org
Dorchester Academy and Museum	Midway, GA	http://dorchesteracademyia.org/museum
DuSable Museum of African American History	Chicago, IL	http://www.dusablemuseum.org/
Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American History Museum	St. Petersburg, FL	http://www.woodsonmuseum.org/
Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center	Des Moines, IA	http://www.fortdesmoinesmuseum.org
Frederick Douglass National Historic Site	Washington, D.C.	https://www.nps.gov/frdo/index.htm
Freetown Village Living History Museum	Indianapolis, IN	http://www.freetown.org
G. W. Carver Interpretative Museum	Dothan, AL	http://www.gwcarvermuseum.org
George Boyer Vashon Research Center and Museum for African American Culture	St Louis, MO	http://www.georgevashonmuseum.org

George Washington Carver Museum	Tuskegee, AL	https://www.nps.gov/tuin/index.htm
George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center	Phoenix, AZ	https://www.gwcmccaz.org/
George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center	Austin, TX	http://www.austintexas.gov/genealogy center
Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition	New Haven, CT	https://glc.yale.edu/
Great Plains Black History Museum	Omaha, NE	https://gpblackhistorymuseum.org/
Greater New Haven African American Historical Society	New Haven, CT	https://www.southernct.edu/ehc/afam/
Griot Museum of Black History	St. Louis, MO	https://www.thegriotmuseum.com/
Gum Springs Historical Society and Museum	Alexandria, VA	http://www.gumspringsmuseum.blogspot .com/p/about-us.html
Hammonds House Museum	Atlanta, GA	https://www.hammondshouse.org/
Hampton University Museum	Hampton, VA	http://www.museum.hamptonu.edu
Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center	Church Creek, MD	https://www.nps.gov/hatu/planyourvisit/index.htm
Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts and Culture	Charlotte, NC	http://www.ganttcenter.org
Historic Stagville State Historic Site	Durham, NC	http://www.stagville.org
Howard County Center of African American Culture	Columbia, MD	http://www.hccaac.org
Ida B. Wells-Barnett Museum Cultural Center of African American History	Holly Springs, MS	http://www.idabwellsmuseum.org
Idaho Black History Museum	Boise, ID	http://www.ibhm.org/

Institute of Black Invention and Technology	Kansas City, MO	http://www.blacktravelingmuseum.org
International African American Museum	Charleston, SC	https://iaamuseum.org/
International Civil Rights Center and Museum	Greensboro, NC	https://www.sitinmovement.org/
Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia	Big Rapids, MI	https://ferris.edu/jimcrow/
John G. Riley Center/Museum of African American History and Culture	Tallahassee, FL	http://www.rileymuseum.org
John Wesley Church and African American Museum	Oxford, MD	http://www.johnwesleychurch.org
Kansas African-American Museum	Wichita, KS	https://www.tkaamuseum.org/
Katherine Dunham Centers for Arts and Humanities	East St. Louis, IL	http://www.kdcah.org
L. B. Brown House Museum	Bartow, FL	http://www.lbbrown.com
Laurel Grove School Museum	Clifton, VA	http://www.laurelgroveschool.org
Legacy Museum of African American History	Lynchburg, VA	http://legacymuseum.org/
Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center	Saint Augustine, FL	http://www.lincolnvillemuseum.org
Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History	Augusta, GA	http://lucycraftlaneymuseum.com/
Margaret Walker Center	Jackson, MS	http://www.jsums.edu/margaretwalker center
Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site	Washington, D.C.	https://www.nps.gov/mamc/index.htm
Mary McLeod Bethune Home	Daytona Beach, FL	http://www.cookman.edu/foundation/index.html
Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum	Culver City, CA	http://claytonmuseum.org/
McKenna Museum of African American Art	New Orleans, LA	http://www.themckennamuseum.com

Mississippi Civil Rights Museum	Jackson, MS	https://mcrm.mdah.ms.gov/
MLK National Historic Site	Atlanta, GA	https://www.nps.gov/malu/index.htm
Mosaic Templars Cultural Center	Little Rock, AR	http://www.mosaictemplarscenter.com/
Muhammad Ali Center	Louisville, KY	https://alicenter.org/
Museum of African American Art	Los Angeles, CA	http://www.maala.org
Museum of African American History and Abiel Smith School	Boston, MA	http://maah.org/site13.htm
Museum of the African Diaspora	San Francisco, CA	https://www.moadsf.org/
Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists	Roxbury, MA	http://ncaaa.org/
National Blues Museum	St Louis, MO	https://www.nationalbluesmuseum.org
National Center for Civil and Human Rights	Atlanta, GA	https://www.civilandhumanrights.org/
National Civil Rights Museum	Memphis, TN	http://www.civilrightsmuseum.org
National Great Blacks in Wax Museum	Baltimore, MD	http://www.greatblacksinwax.org
National Memorial for Peace and Justice and the Legacy Museum	Montgomery, AL	https://museumandmemorial.eji.org/
National Museum of African American History and Culture	Washington, D.C.	https://www.nmaahc.si.edu
National Museum of African American Music	Nashville, TN	http://www.nmaam.org
National Underground Railroad Freedom Center	Cincinnati, OH	https://freedomcenter.org/
National Voting Rights Museum and Institute	Selma, AL	http://nvrmi.com/
Negro Leagues Baseball Museum	Kansas City, MO	https://www.nlbm.com/

Newsome House Museum and Cultural Center	Newport News, VA	http://www.newsomehouse.org
New Orleans African American Museum	New Orleans, LA	https://www.noaam.org/
Nicodemus National Historic Site	Nicodemus, KS	https://www.nps.gov/nico/index.htm
Northwest African American Museum	Seattle, WA	http://www.naamnw.org
Old Dillard Museum	Fort Lauderdale, FL	https://www.browardschools.com/Page/35769
Old Salem Museums and Gardens	Winston-Salem, NC	http://www.oldsalem.org
Oliver Nestus Freeman Round House Museum	Wilson, NC	http://www.theroundhousemuseum.com
Oran Z's Black Facts and Wax	Los Angeles, CA	http://www.oransblackmuseum.com/
Paul R. Jones Collection of African American Art	Newark, DE	https://art.ua.edu/gallery/prj/
Pennsylvania Abolition Society	Philadelphia, PA	http://www.paabolition.org
Price Public Community Center and Swift Museum	Rogersville, TN	http://www.swiftmuseum.org
Prince George's African American Museum and Cultural Center	North Brentwood, MD	http://www.pgaamcc.org/
Purdue Black Cultural Center	West Lafayette, IN	https://www.purdue.edu/bcc
Reginald F. Lewis Museum	Baltimore, MD	http://www.lewismuseum.org/
Ritz Theater and LaVilla Museum	Jacksonville, FL	http://www.ritzjacksonville.com/
River Road African American Museum	Donaldsville, LA	http://www.africanamericanmuseum.org
Rosa Parks Library and Museum	Montgomery, AL	http://www.troy.edu/rosaparks/museum/
San Diego African American Museum of Fine Art	San Diego, CA	http://www.sdaamfa.org
San Francisco African American Historical and Cultural Society	San Francisco, CA	http://www.sfaahcs.org/

Seacoast African American Cultural Center	Portsmouth, NH	http://www.saacc-nh.org
Shorefront Legacy Center	Evanston, IL	http://www.shorefrontlegacy.org/
Slave Mart Museum	Charleston, SC	http://www.oldslavemartmuseum.com/
Smith Robertson Museum and Cultural Center	Jackson, MS	https://www.jacksonms.gov/index.aspx?nid=143
Spelman College Museum of Fine Art	Atlanta, GA	http://museum.spelman.edu/
Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum	Springfield, IL	https://spiaahm.org/
Stax Museum of American Soul Music	Memphis, TN	http://www.staxmuseum.com
Studio Museum in Harlem	New York, NY	https://www.studiomuseum.org
Tangipahoa African American Heritage Museum	Hammond, LA	https://www.taahm.org/
The King Center	Atlanta, GA	http://www.thekingcenter.org/
Tubman African American Museum	Macon, GA	http://www.tubmanmuseum.com/
Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site	Tuskegee, AL	https://www.nps.gov/tuai/index.htm
Tuskegee Airmen National Museum	Detroit, MI	https://www.tuskegeemuseum.org/
Underground Rail Road History Project	Albany, NY	http://www.undergroundrailroadhistory.org
Union Kempsville High School Museum	Virginia Beach, VA	http://www.museumsvb.org/museums/union-kempsville
Vaughn Cultural Center and Museum	St Louis, MO	https://www.ulstl.com/vaughn-cultural-center
Weeksville Heritage Center	Brooklyn, NY	http://www.weeksvillesociety.org
Whitney Plantation	Wallace, LA	http://www.whitneyplantation.com
William V. Banks Broadcast Museum	Detroit, MI	http://wgprtvhistory.org/page/